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1450-1560

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EUROPEANS IN WEST AFRICA, 1450-1560

*Documents to illustrate the nature and scope of
Portuguese enterprise in West Africa, the abortive
attempt of Castilians to create an empire there, and
the early English voyages to Barbary and Guinea*

Translated and edited

by

JOHN WILLIAM BLAKE, M.A.

VOLUME I

With Two Maps

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TO
MY WIFE

PREFACE

THE main object of this work is to present, as far as known records permit, a contemporary picture of conditions on the West African coast between Arguim and the equator during the first century of the Portuguese occupation. Some of the better-known contemporary works, written about this subject, have already been translated and edited for the Hakluyt Society.¹ The writers whose works have thus been published, however, were concerned to tell the story of the discovery and settlement of Guinea by Prince Henry the Navigator and his successors only up to the beginning of the reign of King Manuel, and only to describe what had been achieved by the Portuguese. Moreover, even those who wrote after the event, such as the competent historian João de Barros, saw the opening up of West Africa primarily as the prologue to the discovery of the sea-route to India. Accordingly, after outlining the progress of discovery along the West African coast down to the Cape of Good Hope, they then concentrated their attention upon the exploits of Portuguese soldiers and administrators in India and the East and devoted little additional time or space to Guinea. It has resulted that contemporary accounts of the changing situation in West Africa, while fairly numerous for the fifteenth century, are difficult to obtain for the half century after 1508. Indeed, no comprehensive description of the coast seems to have been produced between 1507, when Valentim Fernandes compiled his *Collection of news*,² and the appearance of Captain

¹ Gomes E. de Azurara, *The chronicle of the discovery and conquest of Guinea* (ed. C. R. Beazley and E. Prestage; Hakluyt Society, ser. I, vols. xciv and c; 1896 and 1899). *The voyages of Cudamusto and other documents* (ed. G. R. Crone; Hakluyt Society, ser. II, vol. lxxx; 1937). Duarte Pacheco Pereira, *Esmraldo de situ orbis* (ed. G. H. T. Kimble; Hakluyt Society, ser. II, vol. lxxix; 1937).

² Valentim Fernandes Alemão, 'Collection of news' [c. 1507], printed in various collections, and summarised by J. A. Schmeller in *Abhandlungen der philosophischphilolog. Klasse der Königlichen Bayerischen Akademie*, bd. IV, pp. 41-7 (Munich; 1847).

André A. d'Almada's *Tratado breve dos rios de Guiné de Cabo Verde* approximately in 1594. So there is a very serious gap in the records of Portuguese enterprise in Guinea during the sixteenth century.

Because no such book was written, or at least because none has survived, it is not to be supposed, however, that the Portuguese either lost interest or gave up their trade and abandoned their forts and factories in Guinea. On the contrary, the reign of King Manuel and the first half of the reign of King John III form a chapter of primary importance in the history of the West African empire of Portugal. The documents printed in this volume are intended to afford some evidence of the general situation in West Africa during this strangely neglected period. Those in the first section will, it is hoped, enable the reader to gain some idea of the nature and scope of Portuguese enterprise in West Africa.

Furthermore, scarcely any contemporary records have yet been translated into English, bearing upon that remarkable series of Castilian voyages to West Africa which were undertaken during the years from 1454 to 1480, a period during which the Spaniards were serious competitors with the Portuguese in the race for colonial supremacy. This aspect of the discovery of Guinea has been almost entirely ignored by English students of the beginnings of European expansion overseas, and it is hoped that the documents assembled in Section II of this volume will help to arouse interest in a subject which provides a new background for the Columbine voyages. Section III contains new documents relating to the early English voyages to Barbary and Guinea. The records of English activity in West Africa between 1480 and 1560, preserved by Richard Hakluyt, have not hitherto been edited for the Society. Because these records also throw much light upon the nature and scope of Portuguese activities on the Guinea coast, it was thought doubly fitting to include them.

To complete this picture of the earliest tentative efforts of the Europeans to occupy and exploit West Africa, it would have been appropriate to include a section on the French voyages. French navigators and merchants were very active on the coast

during the period from 1530 to 1560. Accordingly, when this volume was first planned, it was intended to include such a section. But circumstances made it impossible to carry out the original plan. A balanced selection of the available records in the French archives being out of the question, I came reluctantly to decide that it would be necessary to omit the French section. The responsibility for this decision is entirely mine.

I have a debt of gratitude to pay to many friends and correspondents who have assisted me in the preparation of this work. I am specially grateful to Professor I. G. Ilubera for helping me in the translation of some of the Spanish documents, though all errors are mine and not his; to my chief, Professor James Eadie Todd, from whom above all others I have learned to attempt, if not to achieve, a tolerable literary style; to Professor A. P. Newton, who originally inspired this work, and to Professor Edgar Prestage for many valuable suggestions and many kindnesses; to Mr. J. T. Furley, of Bole Cottage, Bucklebury Common, Berkshire, for drawing my attention to a number of useful manuscripts in the Torre do Tombo; to Mr. Edward Watson for constructing the two maps; to Mrs. M. S. Jayne, Dr. S. George West and Senhor Antonio J. Basto for their assistance in securing transcriptions from the Torre do Tombo; to Dr. J. A. Williamson for permission to reproduce documents 110 and 111; to Dr. D. B. Quinn, Professor T. W. Moody and Mr. Edward Heawood; to the officials of the British Museum, the Public Record Office, and the Torre do Tombo; and, last but not least, to Mr. Edward Lynam, the honorary secretary of the Society, for his encouragement, his unfailing kindness, and his many constructive and scholarly suggestions.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE FOOTNOTES

Only those abbreviations have been included which might cause confusion:

APC. *Acts of the privy council of England.*

Asia. Barros, João de. *Da Asia.*

Bensaude. Bensaude, J. *L'astronomie nautique au Portugal à l'époque des grandes découvertes.*

'Cartas de quitação.' Braancamp Freire, A. 'Cartas de quitação del Rei D. Manuel' in *Arquivo historico portugues.*

EHR. *English historical review,* The.

Ensaios. Lopes de Lima, J. J. *Ensaios sobre a statistica das possessões portuguezes na Africa occidental e oriental.*

Esmeraldo. Pereira, Duarte Pacheco. *Esmeraldo de situ orbis.*

Ford. Ford, J. D. M. *Letters of John III, King of Portugal.*

Galvão. Galvão, Antonio. *Treatise of discoveries.*

OED. *Oxford English Dictionary,* The.

Palencia. Palencia, F. Alonso de. *Crónica de Enrique IV.*

Pina. Pina, Ruy de. *Chronica del Rey Dom João II.*

Resende. Resende, Garcia de. *Chronica que trata da vida do Dom João II.*

SECTION I

THE FIRST CENTURY OF PORTUGUESE
ENTERPRISE IN WEST AFRICA

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

THE history of the first century of the Portuguese discovery and occupation of the West African coast may be conveniently divided into three periods: firstly, that of exploration up to 1480; secondly, the very prosperous period of trade and settlement from 1481 to 1530; and, thirdly, the period of gradual decline after 1530, a decline which resulted from the intrusion of interlopers and the consequent destruction of settlements and the interruption of trade. The history of the first period has always attracted close attention from scholars, the second some, and the third scarcely any attention, and one of the reasons for this is that contemporary records for the fifteenth century are, or have been made, more readily available for the general reader than those for the sixteenth century. The reader may obtain a more coherent and balanced account of the course of events from the documents printed below. These have been preceded by a review of what is known about the exploration of the Guinea coast between 1462 and 1480, and a description of West Africa under the Portuguese between 1481 and 1560.

The Discovery of the West African Coast, 1462-80

Much has been written about Portuguese oversea exploration before 1480. Its progress onwards from the conquest of Ceuta in 1415 was recorded in the reign of King Affonso V by a few notable contemporaries, many of whose works have been happily preserved, and since then a great number of historians have tried to reconstruct the story. Of the extant contemporary accounts, Azurara's *Chronicle of the discovery and conquest of Guinea* provides the most complete and most authentic record of exploration down the West African coast approximately up to the year 1448, while the narratives of the voyages of Cadamosto, Diogo Gomes and Pero de Cintra carry the story on-

wards to 1462¹. Exploration during the years from 1462 to 1480, however, has not been chronicled with the same degree of detail and precision. During this period the Portuguese explored the Mina (or Gold) coast, the larger islands in the Gulf of Guinea, and probably also the curving and indented coast of the African mainland around the Gulf as far south as Cape St. Catherine. Yet there is extremely little contemporary evidence of this great advance. The best account may be found in chapter two of the second book of the first decade of the *Asia*, published by João de Barros in 1552². Barros produced his history long after the event, but there are solid reasons for accepting his narrative as fairly reliable. He records that Pero de Cintra had already explored as far south as Sierra Leone. He proceeds to describe how in November 1469 King Affonso V leased the Guinea trade for five years to a Lisbon citizen named Fernão Gomes, on condition *inter alia* that in each of the five years he explored one hundred leagues of coast farther on. As a result, he writes, the limit of discovered lands was soon advanced by the agents of Gomes under the terms of the contract from Sierra Leone as far eastwards and southwards as Cape St. Catherine. Soeiro da Costa, who had taken part in the voyage of Pero de Cintra, discovered the Rio de Soeiro near where the lodge and factory of Axim were afterwards erected for the prosecution of trade in gold with native merchants. Furthermore, two of the agents of the Lisbon financier, João de Santarem and Pero de Escobar, assisted by the pilots Martin Fernandes and Alvaro Esteves, discovered the gold traffic of Mina in January 1471, and the first trade in gold was pursued at Samma. The king rewarded Gomes with a knighthood for this service and granted him a patent on 29 August 1474, empowering him to wear an appropriate crest of arms, and bestowing upon him in commemoration of his achievement the title 'da Mina'. Barros then describes the discovery by order of King Affonso V of the four larger islands in the Gulf of Guinea:

.... Also at this time, one Fernão do Po discovered the Ilha Formosa, which now bears the name of its discoverer in place of that

¹ These works have already been published by the Hakluyt Society. See above, p. ix, note 1.

² Printed in *The voyages of Cadomosto* (ed. G. R. Crone), pp. 107-14.

which he had given it. And the last discoverer in the life of this King Afonso was one de Sequeira, knight of his household, who discovered the cape which we call Cabo de Catharina, a name he then gave it because it was discovered on the day of this Saint¹... The Ilha de S. Thomé, Anno bom, and do Principe were also discovered by order of King Dom Afonso, and other trading-places and islands which we do not treat in detail.

The narrative in the *Asia* thus contains only two dates with reference to the order in which these discoveries were made. We are informed that Fernão Gomes received a lease of the Guinea trade at the end of 1469, and that it was in January 1471 that the gold trade of Mina was discovered. Barros, whose dates are not always to be trusted², was very vague about when the islands were found, merely recording that it was in the lifetime of Affonso V.

His account is thus very brief. This is remarkable in that the discovery of the Mina Coast was regarded by his contemporaries as by far the most important event in the whole history of the exploration of the Guinea coast. The voyage of João de Santarem and Pero de Escobar, undertaken evidently during the winter of 1470–1, was a more significant achievement than that of Cadamosto or that of Diogo Gomes, and yet no separate record of it has been preserved. If it is desired, indeed, to reconstruct the story of the opening up of the coast between Cape Palmas and Cape St. Catherine, one is forced to draw mainly upon the fragmentary details furnished by Barros. There are others who, like him, recorded that Affonso V leased the Guinea trade to Fernão Gomes in 1469; but apart from Pacheco and Antonio Galvão, whose works are considered below, these other writers do not assist one to piece together the fragments. The chroniclers, Ruy de Pina, Garcia de Resende and Damião de Goes, do not record a single fact not to be found in Barros. The *Esmraldo de situ orbis*, however, written by Duarte Pacheco Pereira approximately in the year 1507, is more informative and

¹ November 25.

² Dr. E. C. Ravenstein has shown that his dating of the first voyage of Diogo Cão was grossly inaccurate. See his 'Voyages of Diogo Cão and Bartholomeu Dias, 1482–88', in *Geographical Journal* (1900), pp. 626–32.

must be regarded as an authoritative work, because its author lived at the same time as the events which he described, and was very well acquainted with the African coastline. He confirms the discovery of the Rio de Soeiro by Soeiro da Costa, and he says that Samma on the Mina Coast was discovered in January 1471 by João de Santarem and Pero de Escobar¹. Moreover, he confirms and supplements Barros by recording that Ruy de Sequeira, a knight of the household of King Affonso V, discovered Cape St. Catherine on November 25 (without giving the year), that the mountain and island of Fernando Po were discovered by another knight of Affonso V, Fernão do Po, that there was a small river seven leagues east of the Rio Real² called after Pero de Cintra, and that Captain Lopo Gonçalves found the cape³ which was named after him. But he declares that the islands of São Thomé and O Principe were found and peopled by King John II⁴, a statement which appears to conflict with the account given by Barros.

Antonio Galvão compiled a *Treatise of Discoveries*⁵ during the last years of his life and his book was published in 1563, six years after his death. His account of the leasing of the Guinea trade to Fernão Gomes and the discovery of Mina in 1471 closely follows that of Barros, but he adds:

... And in the following year 1472 Fernão do Poo discovered the island which is called after him, and at the same time the islands of Sam Thomé and Principe, which stand on the line, were discovered, and on the mainland the kingdom of Benij up to the Cabo de Caterina which lies three degrees on the south side, and he who made this discovery was a dependant of his majesty, and he was called Siqueira⁶.

Galvão is not usually considered to be an author from whom much is to be learnt about the progress of discovery down the West African coast. It should be remembered, however, that he spent many years in India and the East Indies, where he probably met fellow-countrymen who were personally familiar

¹ Bk. 2, ch. 4.

² The combined estuary of the New Calabar and Bonny rivers.

³ Cape Lopez.

⁴ Pacheco's evidence may be found in bk. 2, chs. 9, 10 and 11.

⁵ Ed. by Vice-Admiral Bethune for the Hakluyt Society (1862).

⁶ Galvão, p. 75.

with West Africa, that he devoted much time and energy to the collection of material for his treatise, and that he records events which other writers omit¹. What he says about Guinea, therefore, is worthy of close attention. He is more definite than Barros in placing the discovery of the island of Fernando Po in the year 1472, and there is no solid reason for not accepting this as true. It is clear from Barros and Pacheco, as well as from Galvão, that Fernão do Po took an active part in the exploration of the Bight of Biafra, while Pacheco's reference to a small river east of the Rio Real named after Pero de Cintra suggests that the latter may have been associated with Fernão do Po in this work. It is therefore probable that Pero de Cintra took part in the exploration of the Bight during 1472. Galvão agrees with Barros but seems to contradict Pacheco, when he assigns the discovery of the islands of São Thomé and O Príncipe to the reign of King Affonso V. Pacheco's work has the weight and authority of contemporaneity, whereas both Barros and Galvão wrote long after the event. Accordingly, one hesitates to conclude that his dating of the finding of the islands is wrong. In point of fact, however, Pacheco does not state categorically that they were discovered in the reign of John II. There are two references in the *Esmraldo* to this discovery: first he writes that 'the island of Sam Thomé . . . was discovered at the bidding of the most serene King John II of Portugal who ordered it to be peopled', and then that the 'smaller island called Sant' Antonio or Príncipe . . . was also discovered and peopled by King John II'². Dr. Ravenstein has suggested that there is no inherent contradiction between these references and the view that the two islands were discovered while John was still a prince³. His suggestion can be accepted. Prince John was charged with the administration of Guinea in 1473 or 1474⁴ and the discovery of the islands was thus effected probably under his supervision. Twenty years later he took steps to populate São Thomé by sending thither numbers of young Jews⁵. Pacheco's allusions

¹ Galvão is the only one of the Portuguese historians of the sixteenth century to record a voyage of discovery from Lisbon to Brazil in 1501.

² Bk. 2, ch. 11.

³ *Geographical Journal* (1900), p. 626.

⁴ See below, p. 15.

⁵ See doc. 9.

may therefore be taken to mean that King John II, while still a prince, caused the two islands to be discovered, and that after his accession to the throne he populated them. There is thus no real contradiction between Barros, Galvão and Pacheco. São Thomé and O Príncipe were found before the end of the reign of King Affonso V.

One may, indeed, go further and suggest that the entire coast beyond Mina as far as Cape St. Catherine was probably explored before the end of his reign, and, indeed, before the end of 1475. We have suggested above that Fernão do Po and Pero de Cintra explored the shores of the Bight of Biafra during 1472. Probably, Lopo Gonçalves was the first to cross the line to find the cape named after him¹. Barros records that the agents of Fernão Gomes reached Cape St. Catherine 'under the terms of his contract', and as his contract expired in 1475², we may assume that the cape was found before the end of this year. Contemporary evidence about the discovery of Benin, however, presents a difficulty, because it is conflicting. Nevertheless, although the official Portuguese view, as expressed by the chroniclers, was that Benin was discovered in the reign of King John II by João Affonso d'Aveiro, we shall demonstrate first that its coast was explored before 1480 and secondly, by a consideration of other data, that this exploration was effected before 1475. So we shall conclude that the whole coast as far south as Cape St. Catherine was explored before the end of the year 1475.

The main difficulty with regard to Benin arises from the fact that, while there is indirect evidence of its exploration before 1480, the more authoritative contemporary writers place its discovery in the reign of John II. Ruy de Pina, Garcia de Resende and Barros all do this. 'In this year [1486]', writes Pina, 'the land of Beny beyond Myna to the Rios dos Escravos was first discovered by Joham Affom da Aveiro who died there' [doc.6]. Resende copied Pina³. Barros records how:

... at the time of Diogo Cam's first return from Congo, in the year 1486, this king of Beny also sent to solicit the king to despatch

¹ *Geographical Journal* (1900), p. 625.

² See the argument below about the duration of the Gomes contract, pp. 14-15.

³ *Chronica que trata da vida do D. João II* (1545), ch. 64.

thither priests who might instruct him in the Faith. This country had already been visited in the previous year by Fernão do Po, who had discovered this coast and also an island near the land, now known by his name. . . . This emissary from the king of Beny came with João Affonso d'Aveiro, who had been sent out to explore this coast by the king and who had brought back the first pepper from these parts of Guinea¹.

Pina and Resende thus date the discovery of Benin in 1486, while Barros states that Fernão do Po visited Benin in 1485, which was the year before Diogo Cão returned from his first voyage to Congo. Cão actually returned to Lisbon early in 1484², and therefore Fernão do Po must have visited the Benin country in 1483. The combined evidence of the three writers thus sets the discovery of Benin between 1483 and 1486.

But there is other evidence, less categorical, which suggests that the Benin coast was explored before 1480. The most important evidence in favour of this view comes from the narrative of Eustache de la Fosse, a Fleming who made a voyage to Mina during the winter of 1479–80. Eustache did not record his African experiences until after the year 1516, by which time his memory of them may have become dimmed, but there is reason for believing that he compiled his narrative partly from notes³. Only one copy of it, now in the Bibliothèque de Valenciennes, is known to exist, and this MS. contains a note at the end by the copyist to the effect that it was written on 29 May 1548⁴. Eustache did not visit Benin personally. But he describes a Portuguese slaving voyage to the Benin coast. He declares that in December 1479, while he was on the Mina Coast, two Portuguese caravels sailed two hundred leagues farther on to buy slaves at the 'Rio do Esclavos', that an honourable knight named 'Fernand de les Vaux' was in command of one of these caravels and had been commissioned to make this voyage, and that during Lent 1480 the two ships arrived back with a cargo of negroes at Mina, where the negroes were then sold as slaves.

¹ *Asia*, dec. I, bk. 3, ch. 3.

² *Geographical Journal* (1900), p. 632.

³ For example, the chronology of the voyage is very exact and the dates which Eustache gives are reasonable.

⁴ Dr. R. Foulché-Delbosc published the MS. in the *Revue hispanique* (1897), pp. 174–201. An abstract from the 'Voyage' is printed below (doc. 101).

The so-called Rio do Esclavos may be identified as the Rio dos Escravos, which Pacheco records was situated five leagues east of the modern Benin river (Rio Formosa)¹. Fernão do Po was almost certainly the Portuguese knight to whom Eustache gives the name Fernand de les Vaux. Here then is powerful evidence that Fernão do Po, the explorer, cruised along the coast of Benin as far as the Rio dos Escravos during the winter of 1479-80. Furthermore, he would scarcely make such a long and hazardous voyage to the eastward to buy negroes, unless he already knew that great numbers of negroes could be obtained on the coast of Benin. One may therefore infer that he, or another, had previously visited it. 'Fernand de les Vaux,' writes Eustache, 'had been commissioned to sail two hundred leagues farther on' beyond Mina. This voyage of his was not one of exploration into unknown seas, but one of trade to a known destination. Moreover, it is not without significance that Fernão do Po was chosen to command the two caravels. This must surely have been because of his knowledge and previous experience of the navigation beyond Mina. So Eustache's evidence offers proof that the coast of Benin had been explored before 1480, and suggests that one of its explorers had been Fernão do Po.

But this view cannot be confidently accepted, unless it can be reconciled with the official thesis of the chroniclers that Benin was discovered in the reign of King John II. This may be done by distinguishing between coastal exploration and inland exploration. The exploration and charting of the coast would normally precede attempts to penetrate inland, and this was undoubtedly the sequence of discovery beyond Mina. Navigators, such as Fernão do Po, taking advantage of the Guinea current, which flows gently eastwards from Cape Palmas into the Bight of Benin and then south-eastwards towards the Bight of Biafra, explored the Benin coast, made contact with the natives, and before the end of the reign of King Affonso V had probably made rough charts of the coastline. Following the method afterwards employed by Pacheco, they doubtless noted its distinguishing features (capes, bays, estuaries, rocks, wooded country, etc.), and especially the

¹ *Esmeraldo*, bk. 2, ch. 8.

several mouths of the Niger which would have appeared to them to be the estuaries of separate rivers, and in the course of their work they must have ascertained that the Benin coast was a profitable source of negro slaves. Then, in December 1479, Fernão do Po, previously equipped with information about the Benin coast, undertook a slaving voyage to the Rio dos Escravos to buy negroes which he afterwards sold at Mina. After completing the business of coastal exploration, however, the Portuguese tried to penetrate inland up the mouths of the Niger. This work was undertaken by the same group of explorers, but not until the reign of John II. So it came about that between 1483 and 1486 Fernão do Po, and others, began to explore the Benin country and to enter into friendly relations with the King of Benin, and this was described by Pina, Resende and Barros. These writers referred to the discovery of the Benin kingdom and not to that of the coast. The categorical sentences of the contemporary chroniclers, Pina and Resende¹, are thus not irreconcilable with the view that the Benin coast was explored before 1480. In point of fact, Barros, compiling his *Asia* more than fifty years after the event and perhaps in possession of additional information, was more cautious than Pina and Resende. In the passage from his history quoted above, he implies that Fernão do Po might have explored the coast before 1483, which was the year when he visited the country of Benin. 'This country [of Benin]', he writes, 'had already been visited in the previous year by Fernão do Po, who had discovered this coast.' Barros does not say that Fernão visited the Benin country when he discovered the coast, and one may interpret this to mean that the coast was explored before the kingdom. There is thus no real incompatibility between the statements of the official writers and the evidence of Eustache de la Fosse. The coast was undoubtedly explored before the year 1480.

Furthermore, there are three good reasons for supposing that the Benin coast was actually explored before 1475. If, first, the task was undertaken at the instigation of Fernão Gomes, it was

¹ Pina completed his *Chronica del Rey Dom João II* approximately in 1500, but it was not printed until 1792. Resende's *Chronica* must have been written before 1536 and was printed in 1545.

presumably completed before the end of his contract, and the contract expired in 1475. Secondly, the outbreak of war between Portugal and Castile in May 1475 most probably seriously interrupted the work of discovery, for the theatre of military and naval operations in the war included West Africa. Hostilities did not cease until 1479, and therefore it may be presumed that the coast of Benin had been explored before the war began. Thirdly, the chronicler Galvão substantiates this. He records that 'at the same time' as Fernão do Po discovered the island, named after him (1472), the kingdom of Benin on the mainland was also discovered¹. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, it would thus appear to be indisputable that the coast of Benin was explored before 1475.

What is true of the Benin coast is also true of the coast as far as Cape St. Catherine. The exploration of the shores of the delta of the Niger formed only a small part of the wider movement of exploration up to the cape, and the same arguments—the war of 1475-79, and the termination of the Gomes contract in 1475—enable us to estimate that the discovery of the coast had proceeded as far as Cape St. Catherine by the year 1475. Moreover, there exist two fragments of evidence which substantiate this. The first is the appearance on contemporary maps of the legend '*arvor de Fernā Gomes*' on the site of Cape St. Catherine, marking the position apparently of a large tree and of the extreme point to which the agents of Gomes attained in their discoveries before the end of 1475². The second and more important piece of evidence is taken from a decree issued by King Affonso V on 31 August 1474, in which he refers to the fact that the popes had made him a perpetual grant of 'the parts and seas and land of Guinea and the islands of the ocean sea from Cabo de Nom and Bogedor *up to the line*'³. The inclusion of the phrase

¹ See above, p. 6.

² '*Arvor de Fernā Gomes*' is the legend on the Cantino map, which was sent to the Duke of Ferrara before 19 November 1502. The legend '*arbol de fernan gomes*' appears on an Italian chart of c. 1508 (B.M., Egerton MS. 2803).

³ '*As partes e mares e terra de Guinea e Ilhas do mar ouçeano des o cabo de Nom e Bogedor atee o merio (meio?) dya.*' The full document is printed in J. Bensaude, *L'astronomie nautique au Portugal à l'époque des grandes découvertes* (1912), pp. 273-4.

'up to the line' is significant, because the papal grants, to which the decree refers, had contained no mention of the equator¹. The use of this phrase was new. It reflected the progress of discovery around the African coast. Affonso V had himself introduced the phrase into the decree, because by August 1474 he had heard that one of his explorers, investigating the coastline of Guinea, had reached the equator. If the king knew this by August, we may assume that the crossing had been effected at the latest during the spring of the same year. A broad interpretation of this thus enables us to state with virtual certainty that by the beginning of 1474 the coast as far as the equator had been explored. There is no evidence to the contrary. Accordingly, this argument, taken together with all the other arguments set out above, may be said to be proof, as far as proof is possible, that the entire coast of West Africa to Cape St. Catherine had been explored before the end of 1474.

The story of African exploration during the period 1462–80 would probably be less confused if more were known about its chief organiser Fernão Gomes. He seems to have been the central figure at least after 1469. But no biography of this pioneer has yet been attempted in any European language and no English writer has yet done full justice to his achievement. Our scanty knowledge of him must be drawn almost entirely from three sources, the *Asia* of Barros, a grant of the Guinea trade which King Affonso V made him on 1 June 1473, and Alonso de Palencia's *Chronicle of King Henry IV of Castile*². It is surprising that Pacheco nowhere refers to him. Pacheco and Gomes both took part in the capture of Arzila and Tangier in the year 1471³ where they must surely have met or known each other, and yet, when Pacheco came to record the discovery of Mina in his *Esmraldo*, he ignored the Lisbon financier's existence! More than mere inadvertence is required to explain Pacheco's silence. Perhaps the reason may be found in petty jealousy, or perhaps in the natural envy which Pacheco, the

¹ The bulls were *Romanus Pontifex* (8 January 1455) and *Inter Caetera* (13 March 1456). They are printed in F. G. Davenport, *European treaties bearing on the history of the United States* (1917), I, 13–26, 28–32.

² *Crónica de Enrique IV* (ed. Paz y Melia; 1904–9).

³ *Esmraldo*, prol. to bk. 2; *Asia*, dec. I, bk. 2, ch. 2.

hard-bitten captain and travel-stained explorer, would bear towards Gomes, the prosperous stay-at-home merchant, who was rewarded by the king for discoveries in which he took little actual physical part. Whatever the cause, Pacheco was not prepared to give any credit to Gomes for the discovery of Mina. So a writer, who must have been specially qualified to describe this elusive financier, remained silent, and we are obliged to fall back upon Barros, the grant of 1473, and Palencia.

The substance of what Barros records has been indicated above. In the year 1469, King Affonso V conferred upon Gomes sole rights of trade for five years in all Guinea south of Arguim except 'the mainland opposite the islands of Cabo Verde, because [in accordance with another grant of 1466¹] this trade was reserved for their inhabitants'². This important privilege was renewed for a sixth year on 1 June 1473³. The second grant was made to 'Fernão Gomes, our knight,' showing that the financier received the knighthood, to which Barros refers, before June 1473; moreover, it confirms that the original grant was for five years, states that Gomes held a written contract to that effect, and reveals that he contracted to pay an extra 100 milreis per year to the king for the sole right to buy malagueta pepper, a right which hitherto by a decree of 1470 had been exercised by Affonso V alone⁴. The Guinea contract was renewed in 1473 for one year in the same form and manner as during the first five years. Gomes was still to lease the trade of Guinea and the trade of Arguim. But the exact date upon which the renewal of the concession was to come into effect was not specified in the grant. The usual custom in after years was for such Guinea contracts to begin either on January 1 or on June 24⁵. Barros does not specify the day upon which the original concession came into force, but he does record that 'the year fourteen hundred and seventy-four . . . was the last of his [Gomes's] lease', thereby implying that Gomes held the contract throughout 1474. If we

¹ Doc. 1. ² *Asia*, dec. 1, bk. 2, ch. 2.

³ The patent, renewing the original grant, is included in this volume (doc. 3), and in order that it may be compared with the earlier grant, Barros's account of the latter has also been reproduced (doc. 2).

⁴ J. R. Coelho, *Alguns documentos do Archivo Nacional* (1892), p. 33.

⁵ See below, docs. 15 and 31.

assume that, in saying this, he did not take into account the extra year afterwards allowed to Gomes, a concession which apparently escaped his notice, then it follows that the grant of 1469 came into effect on 1 January 1470 and expired on 31 December 1474, and that the grant was renewed in June 1473 for the whole of the year 1475. This view, indeed, is almost certainly accurate, because it accords with the few facts which are known about Gomes and his contract. It explains, for example, why a long period elapsed between the making of the grant in 1469 and the discovery of the gold traffic at Mina in January 1471. Also, it accounts for the assertion of Palencia that Gomes was still the contractor in 1475 (doc. 89). It may therefore be accepted. The grant to Gomes ran from 1470 to 1474 inclusive, and was renewed for the year 1475.

Palencia furnishes us with details concerning the end of Gomes's tenure of the Guinea trade. He describes a Spanish voyage to Guinea in 1475, and records that in that year Fernão Gomes refused to pay the rent for his contract, seemingly because he was losing a part of his legitimate profits from the trade to the Spanish interlopers:

... Fernan Gomez, who was wont each year to pay King Don Alfonso 60,000 cruzados of gold, equivalent to the same number of ducats, in exchange for the sole right of sending a fleet to Guinea and reaping the profits from such a trade, declined to pay the rent, as long as he did not recover his privilege and in face of the probability that the expeditions would each time become more productive for the powerful Andalucians. Then, Prince Don John determined that Fernan Gomez, after being exempted from the tribute, should go off to Guinea with twenty ships, preceding the Andalucians, who were preparing another expedition of thirty sail (doc. 89).

Palencia's record is interesting and illuminating, and what he says can be checked and confirmed in one respect by documentary evidence. On 31 August 1474, King Affonso V, perhaps at the instance of Fernão Gomes, issued an order providing for the stricter regulation of the Guinea trade, and in this order he announced that he had 'made a grant of the said trades' of Guinea to his son, prince John¹. Responsibility for the defence

¹ Bensaude, pp. 273-4.

and administration of West Africa was thus transferred in 1474, or just before then, from the king to his son, and Gomes, as sole contractor in the Guinea trade, came in this way to be under obligation to pay rent, as Palencia says, to the prince and not to the king. In consequence of the outbreak of war between Portugal and Castile in May 1475, however, Castilian merchants began to make raids into Guinea, inflicting losses upon the ships of Gomes during the sixth year of his tenure of the contract. Gomes, therefore, withheld the rent, and when the contract expired at the end of 1475, it was not renewed. Prince John exempted Gomes from the payment of the rent and himself took over the prosecution of the trade. Towards the end of 1475, he sent Gomes as captain of a large fleet of twenty ships to bring back gold from Mina. Gomes departed—the only evidence that he ever visited Guinea in person—and returned to Portugal safely in the following year¹. It is not known whether he took any further interest in the Guinea trade. In 1478, Affonso V gave additional recognition to his services by appointing him to the royal council².

Although the evidence set out above is fragmentary, it is enough to allow a partial reconstruction of the story of the exploration of the Guinea coast between 1462 and 1480. The initial momentum of discovery, generated by Prince Henry the Navigator, had spent itself by the end of 1462, and then for nearly eight years exploration was neglected in favour of trade along the known part of the coast. Interest in discovery was revived by the far-sighted Fernão Gomes, whose grant of the Guinea trade came into force probably on 1 January 1470. He devoted his energies to the advancement of African discovery, and the result was that by 1475 the entire coast as far as Cape St. Catherine and the islands in the Gulf of Guinea had all been discovered and to some degree explored. After receiving the grant in 1469, he must have made careful preparations for his first expedition, whose commanders were to explore the coast beyond the point reached by Pero de Cintra in 1462. João de Santarem and Pero de Escobar were put in charge of the fleet

¹ Palencia, dec. III, bk. 25, chs. 4 and 5; bk. 26, chs. 5 and 6.

² *Asia*, dec. I, bk. 2, ch. 2.

being equipped, and the most skilful pilots in all Iberia were employed¹, no expense apparently being spared which might contribute to the success of the enterprise. Autumn was the most suitable season for fleets destined for Guinea to leave Portugal, and this, taken with the fact that Santarem was on the Mina Coast in January 1471, points to his having sailed from Portugal in September or October 1470. When he reached Mina, he was successful in opening up the gold trade at Samma. Soeiro da Costa probably voyaged with him as far as Axim, where da Costa remained to explore in greater detail, while Santarem rounded Cape Three Points in order to explore the coast beyond. It is reasonable to suppose that Santarem and his crews, lacking any provision base on the Guinea coast, did not sail beyond Mina. The Rio da Volta came to be regarded as the eastern limit of the Mina Coast², and both this circumstance and the name 'da Volta', given to the river, suggest that, when Santarem (or one of his subordinates) reached this point, he turned back. All probably then returned to Portugal to arrive in the spring or early summer of 1471.

The chronology of exploration during the following three years cannot be exactly ascertained from the evidence. Gomes, encouraged by the success of his first venture, equipped new fleets, partly with the object of continuing the discovery of the coast and partly in order to develop the gold trade. Probably he sent out at least one fleet each winter, that is, during the winters of 1471–2, 1472–3, 1473–4 and 1474–5. Palencia affirms that at this time a fleet was 'annually despatched to Guinea' and that the fleet assembled in Lisbon in 1475 was 'destined according to custom for Guinea . . . to embark gold'³. When these fleets reached Mina, specially equipped ships were possibly detailed for exploration beyond Mina. Pero de Cintra, Fernão do Po, Lopo Gonçalves and Ruy de Sequeira figured among the captains of ships selected for this hazardous work, and between them they effected the exploration of the coast to Cape St.

¹ Pacheco records that one of the pilots, Alvaro Esteves, was 'the man most skilled in his profession in Spain at that time' (*Esmeraldo*, bk. 2, ch. 4). See also *Asia*, dec. 1, bk. 2, ch. 2.

² PRO, HCA 13/29, 13 March 1591.

³ Palencia, dec. III, bk. 26, ch. 5.

Catherine. It was probably during the winter of 1472-3 that the first two explored the Bights of Benin and Biafra, and Fernão do Po found the island named after him late in 1472. Lopo Gonçalves crossed the equator between 1472 and the early months of 1474, the news reaching Portugal before August 1474. Sequeira's voyage was the last notable achievement before the end of 1474. He made his way to Cape St. Catherine either during the winter of 1472-3 or, more probably, during that of 1473-4. Setting out from Lisbon in company with the annual Mina fleet, he left it at Mina and sailed forward, arriving at the cape on 25 November 1473. Perhaps he began his return by navigating westwards with the equatorial current, and, if so, he may have come upon the islands of São Thomé (21 December 1473?) and O Príncipe, first named St. Antonio after the saint on whose day (January 17) it was found. The outbreak of war in 1475 interrupted further exploration and no other important discovery was made before 1480.

West Africa under the Portuguese, 1481-1560

One of the effects of the explorations carried out during the years before 1480 was to place at the disposal of the Portuguese government more than two thousand miles of African coastline, extending from Arguim to Cape St. Catherine, and, in addition, the Cape Verde islands and the islands in the Gulf of Guinea. Ownership of these lands was exclusively claimed by the Portuguese. King John II, who ascended the throne in 1481, was an enthusiastic and far-sighted imperialist, and, in 1486, in order to advertise his claim, he assumed the title of Lord of Guinea. Seven years later, he tried to strengthen his claim and to consolidate his position in West Africa by persuading the pope to confirm the earlier bulls, which had conferred all the land of Guinea upon his predecessor, Affonso V¹. Afterwards, the kings of Portugal refused to acknowledge that any person had any right to go to West Africa without the licence or commission of themselves or of their accredited agents. When their claims were disputed, they would appeal to papal grants, argue that the expense in-

¹ Davenport, I, 56-83.

volved in discovery entitled them to a monopoly in Guinea, and, more particularly, assert that they exercised dominion over all Guinea and that they exacted tribute and obedience from the native kings and princes. In 1562, the Portuguese ambassador in London advanced the following arguments in support of exclusive dominion:

The kings of Portugal have desired chiefly to spread abroad the Word of God . . . without setting upon their subjects any tribute or imposts whatever.

As to the manner in which the crown of Portugal has always used and enjoyed, and uses and enjoys, the actual possession of the said lands, where the rule has been by force of arms, they pay tribute; and where there has been any doubt of the fidelity of the people, or any fear that the Turks, Saracens, or other nation would assail, they have built castles and fortresses and great towns and cities. Where there has been no necessity for garrisons, or the air so pestilent that it was manifest danger for the lives of men, there has only been a farm of traffic or trade established, which has been always, and is at this present, kept, entertained and continued, even so as it was ordained from the beginning (which is no less than six score years) without, in all the coast of Ethiopia, any of the princes once rebelling.

As to the force ordered by the kings of Portugal for the preservation of their right, for to keep the people of the said countries and lands in subjection and obedience and for to keep them from the hurt of the people of any other nation (since it was seen that of one hundred persons there escapes not at the end of the year more than twenty and a few more, and those scarce in health), it was more expedient to send every year one army by sea to protect the traffic and prevent any ships, either Portuguese or other, from trading without an express licence. . . . And thus for six score years hitherto, the kings of Portugal have always enjoyed the real and actual possession and domain of the said lands¹.

But this was a gross exaggeration. The sway of the Portuguese was strictly limited to their fortified settlements on the coast. They exercised little or no power among the great majority of the tribes, and their authority was never extended into the interior. Their policy, indeed, was to extend their con-

¹ B.M., Lansdowne MS. 171, ff. 139b-143. The spelling of this quotation has been modernised.

trol as widely as possible, and with this objective they established themselves firmly in the larger islands and in a few fortified posts, and, using these settlements as bases, repeatedly tried by every conceivable means to reduce a wider area to obedience. They negotiated treaties with many native princes. They undertook voyages of discovery overland from the coastal bases into the remote and unknown interior. They sent out missionaries to the native kingdoms, built chapels, converted native potentates, and by these means tried to bind them to allegiance. They exacted tribute from negro and Berber fishermen, where they were sufficiently strong to enforce this. They persuaded, cajoled and coerced, trading on friendly terms with the black merchants, offering the negroes gifts, extending hospitality to them, or threatening them with the guns of their forts and the crossbows of their archers. But all their efforts were only partially successful.

One of the chief difficulties with which they had to contend was that West Africa was an enormous country whose climate was unfavourable, while the resources at their disposal were small. They could not hope effectively to occupy the coast all the way from Barbary to Cape St. Catherine. White settlements in West Africa were not self-supporting. The foods required, and in particular the fresh water, were often not easily obtainable locally. The colonists and garrisons greatly depended upon supplies from the home country, and the Guinea coast was a long, and to some degree hazardous, sea-voyage from Portugal. Nor could small white communities in West Africa be defended against the overwhelmingly superior numbers of the negro tribes, without constant support from the mother country. Those whites who did settle in Guinea found that they could not even resist the rigours of a tropical climate for many months, and the mortality rate among them was high. In consequence, the custom of frequent changes at regular intervals in official personnel was soon adopted. In the circumstances, the Portuguese, faced by so many obstacles, wisely did not attempt to carry out any large-scale occupation. Instead, they confined their efforts to establishing themselves firmly in a small number of fortified coastal bases, and they used these stations as trading

centres and in order to radiate their influence along the coast and inland, and thus to secure a degree of obedience and friendliness among the surrounding tribes. This policy had much to commend itself. It neither involved a large personnel nor imposed an inordinately heavy burden upon the limited shipping tonnage available. It was not unduly costly. The Portuguese chose what seemed to them to be the best sites for their bases, and in this way managed to direct, control and canalise the trade of Guinea, without having to penetrate inland through the tropical forest belt which stretches across most of West Africa behind the coastal plain. By the use of swift galleys and the minatory guns of their fortified stations, they were able to head off occasional interlopers from the more important trading resorts. Thus, as long as there was no serious incursion of raiders, the Portuguese, in spite of their loose hold, were able to extract handsome profits from their West African empire. This was the case during the reigns of King John II and King Manuel, a golden age in the annals of Portugal in Africa. It was not until after 1530, when French interlopers, followed by English, began in ever-increasing numbers to undertake 'voyages of traffic' to Guinea, that the system of a few isolated and fortified posts proved inadequate. When that time came, the Portuguese found that they could not maintain their hitherto privileged position, and they were forced involuntarily to allow others to share in the treasures which they were the first to tap.

They established four chief bases and used a few, smaller, subordinate posts. The four were Arguim, Santiago island, São Jorge da Mina and São Thomé island. Arguim was their only base until the discovery and settlement of the Cape Verde islands. Santiago, the largest island in the Cape Verde archipelago, came to be the entrepôt for trade with the mainland between the Senegal and Sierra Leone and was sometimes used as a base for various operations on the mainland. São Jorge da Mina was the most important base in all Guinea, its special purpose being the defence of the gold trade of Mina. The island of São Thomé, apart from the inherent value of its sugar plantations, served as the centre of operations on the mainland beyond Mina around the Gulf of Guinea.

ARGUIM AND ITS HINTERLAND. Arguim was a small island off the African coast situated in the bay formed between the arm of Cabo Blanco and the mainland. Diniz Dias and Nuno Tristão discovered it in 1443. Its position was recognised as suitable for an attempt to divert towards the western coast and the Portuguese the Sudan trade, which for centuries had passed northwards by caravan across the Sahara to the Mediterranean ports. Accordingly, a factory was built, shortly after the finding of the island, and a fort to protect the factory. Arguim, thus fortified, rose to great importance both as a trading centre and as a starting-point for overland expeditions into the interior. Its commercial importance was due to the fact that through it the great wealth of the western Sudan was successfully tapped. Arab and Berber merchants travelled westwards great distances across the desert from the unknown interior to barter away their goods to the Portuguese, whose caravels approached the coast at various points near Arguim. The Moslem traders brought civet, malagueta pepper, gum and gold dust from Timbuktu and Jenne, slaves from the lands of the Jalofo and the Mandinga, negro peoples who lived beyond the Senegal, and salt from the mines of Taghaza¹. In exchange for these goods, the Portuguese merchants, who leased the Arguim trade, gave the Moors a great variety of cloths, kerchiefs, shawls, burnouses and linens, corn, horses, bowls, pots, combs, looking-glasses, needles and hides for shields².

The extent and nature of this trade is illustrated by three little records printed below (docs. 32, 33, 34). They show how in the summer of 1515, when Estevão da Gama was captain of Arguim fort, Gonçalo Fernandes, captain of the caravel *Santa Catarina*, took on board from the factory in the island a mixed cargo of goods. He was commissioned to sail southwards along the coast of Anterote, which was the name given by the Portuguese to the shore between Arguim and the Senegal, and to barter away his cargo to the Moors at certain trading points, in particular at Ponta de Tofia and Sete Moutas. These places cannot be

¹ An excellent account of the trade of the western Sudan may be found in E. W. Bovill, *Caravans of the old Sahara* (1933).

² *Esmeraldo*, bk. I, ch. 24; Cadamosto, chs. 9, 14.

identified today, but they were known to the Portuguese, for Pacheco and Cadamosto refer to them and they are marked on contemporary maps¹. They are evidence of the prosperity of the trade once pursued by the Portuguese on this part of the African coast. To this the unusual variety of goods embarked by Fernandes also stands witness. This voyage of his, moreover, illustrates how Arguim was the entrepôt for local trade. Supply ships carried goods from Portugal to Arguim, where they were stored in the factory. Other ships were appointed to transport such goods from the factory to destinations on the mainland, such as Ponta de Tofia, where they were sold to Moslem traders. Slaves were mostly obtained in exchange, and these were taken to the factory and kept there until ships were available to carry them to Portugal. The governor of the castle would report home to the officers of the Casa de Guiné in Lisbon. Thus, on 9 November 1510, Francisco de Almada reported that there were 160 slaves in the factory waiting to be transported to Portugal, and at the same time sent an urgent appeal for more merchandise, because supplies in Arguim were running short (doc. 25). Arguim was thus not merely a port of call, but also an entrepôt for the trade of the surrounding district as far south as the Senegal.

The Portuguese desired above all to obtain gold through Arguim. They knew very little about the interior. For centuries Europeans had been unable to gain possession of the closely guarded secrets of the trade of the western Sudan. Contact with Arab merchants in the ports of northern Africa, however, established through Jewish intermediaries, had enabled Christian traders to glean that the mysterious city of Timbuktu was the centre of a great trade in gold dust, which was brought from the unknown lands to the south. Accordingly, when the Portuguese established their fort in Arguim, their chief objective seems to have been to tap the hidden gold 'mines' of the interior. The first result was evidently promising. Some gold was obtained. The northward stream of gold was to some extent diverted

¹ *Esmraldo*, bk. 1, ch. 26; Cadamosto, ch. 14. The Cantino map includes the inscription 'ponta de toffia' marked just south of the Rio de São João (St. John's Bay), and south of this that of 'Sete Moutas' (Seven Thickets?).

westwards. The Moors at Arguim, wrote Cadamosto, 'give in exchange slaves . . . and gold dust'¹. This encouraged the Portuguese to more ambitious plans. Barros and Pacheco tell us that King John II founded a factory in Wadan². This was a small oasis village a few days' march east of Arguim. Its position was important. It was situated at the junction of the northern caravan route from Timbuktu to the Maghreb and the western route to Arguim. Rodrigo Reinel, a squire of the king's household, was sent from Arguim with two colleagues to organise this factory. The intention was to divert more trade from the northern to the western caravan route. King John II, writes Barros:

... also sent from the castle of Arguim to the town of Huadem—which lies about sixty leagues to the east of it—to establish a factory among the Moors, because there was some trade in gold there. On this business went Rodrigo Reinel, as factor, Diogo Borges, as writer, and Gonçalo d'Antes as assistant.

But the venture was a failure. The land was desert, the people were inhospitable, and the Arab merchants probably very suspicious. Reinel was forced to return, escaping only with difficulty, and the factory was apparently abandoned. This happened approximately in the year 1487³. It is possible that the Portuguese made other unrecorded attempts to maintain an establishment at Wadan, partly in quest of gold and partly to obtain news of the interior. Arguim was in some ways a favourable spot from which to make such efforts. Barros says that John II entrusted the discovery of the interior to Moors who came to Arguim⁴. King John III did the same upon at least one occasion in 1543 (doc. 67). But interest in Wadan probably faded, after the opening up of the gold trade at Mina had imposed a limit upon the supply available for barter in the oasis

¹ Cadamosto, ch. 9.

² *Asia*, dec. 1, bk. 3, ch. 12; *Esmervaldo*, bk. 1, ch. 25.

³ The date is uncertain. Barros, however, states that Reinel went to Wadan at the same time as John II sent Vicente Annes on a similar mission. Vicente was rewarded by the king, for services rendered in an embassy to Mandi Mansa, on 1 August 1488. This suggests 1487 as the year when the expeditions were made. See Sousa Viterbo, *Trabalhos nauticos dos Portuguezes nos seculos XVI e XVII* (1898-1900), I, 305.

⁴ *Asia*, dec. 1, bk. 3, ch. 12.

town¹. The Portuguese, indeed, did not in the end obtain as much gold through Arguim as at the outset they had expected.

It was from slaves rather than from gold that huge profits were made in the Arguim trade. Cadamosto records that in his time 1000 negro slaves were annually shipped from Arguim to Portugal². The slaves were brought from far in the interior to the market at Wadan, and from there, while some were taken northwards to the Mediterranean ports, others were taken westwards to Arguim. The slave trade sustained for more than a century the life of this island base. Successive governors of Arguim devoted most of their attention to the administration of the slave trade, sending reports home of the number and condition of the slaves available in the factory; begging for supplies to feed the slaves and merchandise suitable for barter with the Arab merchants in order to obtain more slaves; drawing the attention of the home government to the fact that the white population on the island was very small, while the slave population was liable to become intolerably large and get out of control, if ships were not sent from Lisbon to take the negroes away; and even negotiating with the King of Portugal to supply negroes from Arguim for the castle of São Jorge da Mina, where black merchants were prepared to accept slaves in exchange for gold. Moreover, chains, rings, fetters and bolts figured prominently among the goods which the Portuguese contractors sold to the Arab merchants in Arguim. Illustrations of all these features of the part played by Arguim as an entrepôt in the slave trade between the western Sudan and Europe may be found below (docs. 11, 25, 32-4, 39, 40, 48, 67). When, however, this trade dwindled into insignificance by comparison with the transatlantic slave trade, the importance of Arguim began to fall.

This decline was pronounced by the middle of the reign of King John III³. There were many additional contributory causes. The upkeep and provisioning of the fort with its surrounding settlement were sometimes difficult. Arguim was not a very favoured island. There was, it is true, a supply of fresh

¹ *Esmeraldo*, bk. 1, ch. 25.

² Cadamosto, ch. 9.

³ M. de Sousa Coutinho, *Annaes do Rei D. João III* (ed. A. Herculano; 1844), p. 405.

water¹, but there was scarcely any meat. The opposite mainland was little better than a desert. 'All the country from Cabo do Bojador to Arguim and fifty leagues beyond', wrote Pacheco, 'is practically desert, being very thinly populated along the sea and in the interior'². The Azenegues, a nomadic Berber people who inhabited the hinterland, lived mainly on fish³, supplemented by purchases of corn from the whites⁴, and the Portuguese had to accustom themselves to this diet. Because fishing was a vital industry, the Portuguese authorities on the island imposed a toll upon it. One-fifth of every catch was paid by the Azenegues to the rulers of the islands⁵. Arguim's existence, however, depended upon quiet trade, and sometimes the trade was interrupted. This might result from various causes, wars on the mainland (doc. 25), the failure of supply ships to arrive at the island from Portugal (doc. 25), or the incursion of interlopers which broke communications between Portugal and the island (doc. 67). The latter tended to become more numerous in the reign of John III, and the upkeep of Arguim then grew more and more difficult. Arguim was essentially dependent upon Portugal. It was not self-supporting. When, therefore, its communication-lines were constantly interrupted by the raids of interlopers, and as the chief interest of the Portuguese was transferred from Arguim to Mina, its position became steadily more serious. There seems to have been an attempt by a group of contractors to revive its declining fortunes in 1535 by associating its trade with that of the Senegal (doc. 55). But the rot could not be stopped. Gomes de Souro reported in 1543 upon his arrival at Arguim (doc. 67) that:

... the Castilians came from Canaria to raid this coast with three ships and began to trade; and ... I found this castle so denuded of all things that I lacked the means to put them to rout. ... If they are allowed on this coast, there will be no trade left for this castle, for

¹ Valentim Fernandes, *Description de la côte d'Afrique de Ceuta au Sénégal* (ed. P. de Cenival and T. Monod; 1938), pp. 53-4. Fernandes's *Description* contains much interesting information about Arguim.

² *Esmeraldo*, bk. 1, ch. 25.

³ Fernandes, *Description*, pp. 54-5.

⁴ R. Ricard in 'Le commerce de Berbérie et l'organisation économique de l'empire portugais aux xv^e et xvi^e siècles' (*Annales de l'Institut d'Etudes Orientales*; 1936; pp. 276-7) describes how the Portuguese imported wheat from the Moroccan plain and exported it to the Arabs at Arguim.

⁵ Fernandes, *Description*, pp. 54-5, 116-17.

they take everything, because they give the Moors 20 dobras per slave, and further they carry captives, which they barter away in exchange for slaves.

The evils which he thus deplored continued. Arguim under the Portuguese did not recover.

SANTIAGO ISLAND AND THE MAINLAND BETWEEN THE SENEGAL AND SIERRA LEONE. The Cape Verde islands, situated some three hundred miles west of the African mainland, enjoyed a suitable position for operations on the coast of Upper Guinea¹. The largest and least infertile island was Santiago, well-wooded, and possessing on the south side at least one fairly good natural harbour which was afterwards converted into the port of Praia. Discovered shortly before the year 1460, the island came to be used as a base and entrepôt for trade with the opposite mainland. It was not a very attractive site for a colony. The Portuguese government, therefore, tried to encourage colonisation by granting special privileges to the Santiagians. On 12 June 1466, the islanders were empowered to send ships to trade up the rivers of the mainland without having to follow the usual procedure of applying for licences to the competent authorities in Lisbon. They were forbidden to send any ships to Arguim, because the trade of that factory had previously been leased to others. Apart from this condition, however, they were now virtually authorised to trade with the whole of the explored part of the Guinea coast (doc. 1). The effect of this concession was to encouragesettlementin Santiago and to promote trade between the island and the mainland. Portuguese, Castilian and Genoese families settled in the island, and negroes were brought from Guinea to work as slaves upon their plantations. Various settlements grew up. Alcantrazes in the north became the centre of the captaincy of the da Noli family. Ribeira Grande in the south-west was founded as the centre of the captaincy of the Affonso family and came to be the administrative capital of the island². Praia, a few

¹ The term 'Upper Guinea', or that of 'northern Guinea', is used in this volume to signify the Guinea coast between the Senegal and Sierra Leone.

² Early in its history, the island was divided into two captaincies, one being granted to Antonio da Noli, the Genoese who took part in the discovery of the Cape Verde islands, and the other being granted to Diogo Affonso, who in the service of Prince Fernando also shared in the discovery of the islands.

miles east of the capital, served as an important port. White society on the island was feudal, aristocratic and, sometimes, corrupt (docs. 62, 68). Its prosperity was very often threatened by famine, fire and disease, and after 1530 by the corsairs (docs. 62, 66, 68). Government was placed in the hands of the captain of Ribeira Grande, assisted by minor officials, such as magistrates and customs officers. Though Santiago stood at the confluence of shipping-routes from Portugal to Guinea, São Thomé, Brazil and the East Indies, the defences of the island were on the whole neglected, and this was a constant source of trouble and complaint.

Santiago came to be the chief entrepôt for trade between Upper Guinea and Portugal. Many ships ran backwards and forwards between the island and the mainland, and others between the island and Portugal. The Santiagians, taking advantage of their special privileges, sent their ships up the rivers Senegal, Gambia and Casamanca, up the estuary of the Farim to Cacheo, where a flourishing settlement of Portuguese grew up, up the Rio Grande, and even as far as the river-mouths along the coast of Sierra Leone. Moreover, many Capverdians crossed to Guinea in order to promote the exchange of goods between the islanders and the negroes. They went to live with their families in native villages, and in this way small white and mulatto communities were founded on the mainland. The colonisation of the Cape Verde islands thus contributed to the exploitation of the resources of northern Guinea.

The number and size of the mainland settlements was augmented by a not very choice collection of unprincipled adventurers, slave-dealers, political exiles and fugitives from justice, who went from Portugal, Spain and the African islands to live outside the law among the blacks of Guinea, intermarrying with them and trafficking in forbidden commodities. 'Among the negroes', recalled Vincent le Blanc of his voyage to Nigritia in 1592, 'live many Portuguese, some married, others spending their time amassing gold'. Portuguese writers described these renegades as '*lancados*', or '*tangos maos*', men, that is, who had

¹ *Les voyages fameux du Sieur Vincent le Blanc* (ed. le Sieur Coulon; 1648), III, 28.

'gone in among' the negroes, or had 'run away'. Once established in Guinea, they soon picked up a smattering of the native tongues and functioned as intermediaries in trade between the whites and the blacks. The authorities strongly disapproved of them and tried to check their activities, particularly because they abused the privileges granted to the Santiagians. Some of them appear to have assisted in smuggling between the islands and the mainland. Others apparently made their way far into the interior of Sierra Leone and up the Senegal and the Gambia, beyond the reach of the law, and there traded illegally with native merchants, refusing to pay the king—or the farmers of the customs—the dues, which were imposed on all goods bought and sold in Guinea, and selling to the natives at reduced prices. Fines were at first levied, where possible, on all who followed the example of these renegades¹. But this did not check the abuses which had thus crept into the trade between Santiago and the mainland. Stern measures were accordingly taken. Harsh restrictions were placed upon the activities of the Capverdians, forbidding them to go to Sierra Leone, limiting the goods to be sold in Guinea to those of the growth and production of the islands, insisting that only whites could captain the ships engaged in the trade, and providing for a rigorous search of every ship on its departure and its return (doc. 37). This was followed in 1518 by a decree prohibiting all trade between the islands and Guinea². These measures, had they been enforced, would probably have crippled the prosperity of the Santiagians. But they were not. The trade, in fact, continued, and the renegade settlements on the mainland therefore thrived. Records indicate that the number of such white enclaves among the negro tribes in northern Guinea increased during the sixteenth century. There was a colony in Joala, another in Portudal and others in Rio Fresco and Beziguiche, all these native ports being situ-

¹ See below, for example, doc. 31, where there is a reference to Gonçalo Lopes, customs officer of Guinea, receiving 31,300 reis 'from certain passengers who went to Serra Leoa and lived among the negroes'; also doc. 35, where Antonio do Porto receives 8000 reis 'from Duarte Rodriguez and Giam Rodriguez as penalties for going to Serra'.

² Senna Barcellos, *Subsidios para a historia de Cabo Verde e Guiné* (1899), I, 84–9.

ated at various distances not far south of Cape Verde. Several more were to be found in native towns on the banks of the Gambia, two of them lying a good way up the river at Cassan and Cantor. A few scattered communities grew up on the banks of the Farim and the Rio Grande, while some existed along the coast of Sierra Leone, notably on the banks of the Mitombo, where, for example, we are told that in 1567 João Valasco, a Santiagian, had been living for many years with other Portuguese¹. Not all of the colonists, of course, were renegades. Some were officials, and others commercial agents employed by the contractors, who, as explained below, enjoyed exclusive rights of trade along certain well-defined parts of the coast. Cacheo, for instance, where tradition has it that a Portuguese settlement was founded in 1470, came long afterwards to be the administrative capital of the mainland settlements, and the officials in this town were recognised by the home government. But such men were to some degree exceptional. Records suggest that many of the whites and mulattoes in northern Guinea did not enjoy either the confidence or the approval of the government². Richard Rainolds, who visited the coast in 1591, has left a description of some of these communities:

In the townes of Porto d'Ally [Portudal] and Joala, being townes of the chiefest trade, and in the townes of Canton³ and Cassan in the river of Gambia are many Spaniards and Portugals resident by permission of the negros; who have rich trades there along the coast, especially to San Domingo⁴ and Rio Grande, not far distant from Gambia river; whither they transport the yron which they buy of Frenchmen and us⁵, and exchange it for negros; . . . And the most part of the

¹ Le Blanc, III. 26-33; F. Guerreiro, *Relações annuis* (1603-11), II, 130 sqq.; A. A. d'Almada, *Tratado breve dos rios de Guiné do Cabo-Verde* (1841), pp. 15 sqq.; PRO, SP 70/95, ff. 261b, 263; PRO, SP 70/99, ff. 1-12. Cantor was situated at the limit up the Gambia to which shipping could approach. Richard Jobson describes Cassan in his *The golden trade* (ed. C. G. Kingsley), pp. 55-6. The Portuguese knew the Farim as the Rio de S. Domingo.

² Almada describes how the renegades actually assisted English and French interlopers to appropriate the trade of Upper Guinea from the Portuguese (*Tratado*, p. 15).

³ Cantor, known today as Kantora.

⁴ The Rio de São Domingo, now known as the river Farim.

⁵ Englishmen.

Spaniards and Portugals that be resident in these places be banished men or fugitives, for committing most hainous crimes and incestuous acts, their life and conversation being agreeable; and they are of the basest behaviour that we have ever seene of these nations in any other countrey¹.

While Portuguese influence among the negro peoples was thus unofficially extended, the government also tried to increase its hold over Upper Guinea through Christian missionaries and merchants who rented the 'trades'. From the beginning, the Portuguese with papal authority had proclaimed a crusade in Guinea against the Moors of northern Africa, and afterwards at least a moral obligation always rested upon them to christianise the tribes with whom they came in contact. If, as the years passed, the zeal of the crusader was more and more surpassed by the greed of the merchant, yet missionary work was never altogether neglected, especially because the merchant understood the value of seeking aid from the Church in upholding the prestige of the whites. So Portuguese rule in Guinea was distinguished by irregular and on the whole not very successful efforts to convert negro kings and their subjects. Santiago island, for example, was the scene of missionary work very early in the history of its colonisation, between the years 1466 and 1470, when two Franciscans paid it a visit and a church was built². But afterwards the spiritual needs of the whites and the converts in Santiago and Guinea were apparently neglected, and it was this which inspired the most striking illustration of the religious policy of the Portuguese in this part of their empire, the erection of Santiago into a bishopric. On 3 January 1533, Pope Clement VII, upon the petition of King John III, issued a bull, separating Santiago from the diocese of Funchal in Madeira, to which it had been attached, raising the town of Ribeira Grande to the status of a city to be henceforth known as the 'city of Santiago'³, appointing Dr. Braz Netto to be the first bishop, and placing under the jurisdiction of the new bishopric

¹ R. Hakluyt, *Principal navigations*, vii, 98–9.

² Barcellos, *Subsidios*, i, 28–31.

³ This will explain why letters from Ribeira Grande, sent after 1533, were always described as coming from 'this city of Santiago'. (See docs. 66, 68.)

all the Cape Verde islands and 'the space of three hundred and fifty leagues of mainland, beginning at the river Gambia near the promontory or place called Cabo Verde, and continuing as far as the promontory or place called Cabo de Palmas¹ and the river St. Andree'². Santiago thus became the base for missionary enterprise in northern Guinea as it was also the base for economic exploitation and settlement on the mainland.

The story of the unfortunate Prince Bemoym illustrates the way in which the Portuguese tried to hide policy behind a show of missionary zeal. This prince became virtual ruler of the Jalofo, a negro people who inhabited the coast between the Senegal and the Gambia, and he entered into friendly relations with the Portuguese, encouraging his people to trade with them and sending presents to King John II. Bemoym's authority, however, was disputed by his half-brothers, who waged war against him. In 1487, the prince appealed to Portugal for assistance. This John II refused, on the ground that the sale of arms and ships to infidels was forbidden by papal decrees, for 'Bemoym was of the sect of Maformede, in which he believed, because of his being a neighbour of, and dealer with, the Azanegues'. The fortune of war in due course turned against Bemoym, and in the following year he was driven out of the Jalofo lands. He came to Portugal, where he was royally welcomed (doc. 7). John II promised him help, if he would become a Christian, whereupon Bemoym and his friends were converted. Bemoym then did homage to the King of Portugal as a vassal, and an expedition was fitted out to take him back to Guinea and restore him. Pero Vaz da Cunha was ordered to proceed to the Senegal with twenty caravels in company with Prince Bemoym to set him upon the throne of Jalofo, and to build a fort at the mouth of the river. The fort, when completed, was not to be given over to the prince, but was to be held for King John II³. It is plain from the evidence that the Portuguese had seen in the misfortunes of this prince a fine chance of ex-

¹ Cape Palmas, situated at the eastern end of the modern Liberian coast.

² Pacheco states that the Rio de S. Andre was situated 33 leagues east of Cape Palmas. The bull is printed in Barcellos, *Subsidios*, I, 101-4.

³ The full story can be reconstructed by combining the narratives of Pina (doc. 7) and of Barros in *Asia*, dec. I, bk. 3, chs. 6-8.

tending their control over the lands between the Senegal and the Gambia. Bemoym was to be a puppet prince, maintained in his place by force of Portuguese arms, and the surrounding district was to be coerced into obedience by the garrison to be stationed in a fort at the mouth of the Senegal. This policy had been tried with good results on the Mina coast, and so there was reason for supposing that it would prove equally successful in Jalofo. Pero Vaz therefore set sail. In order to keep up the pretence of a great crusade, he took with him 'priests . . . and a great number of articles for churches and for the business of conversion'. But the expedition ended disastrously. Bemoym was mysteriously slain, and Pero Vaz returned to Portugal without completing his task.

The desire to subjugate the Jalofo people was not the only motive inspiring this undertaking. King John II also hoped to establish contact with Timbuktu and by means of a fortified post on the banks of the Senegal control the gold trade of the interior. Just as he and his successors made several attempts to reach Timbuktu overland from Arguim, so in the same way they hoped to find in the Senegal a route to the city, this time by water. Contemporary geographers for the most part believed that this river was a branch of the Nile, flowing westwards through the Sudan past Timbuktu to the 'ocean sea'. Accordingly, provided the Senegal was navigable, it ought to be possible for ships from Lisbon to sail all the way to Timbuktu. If this route was practicable, moreover, then it would have to be guarded, and for this reason Pero Vaz was sent to build a fortress. Pero Vaz failed. But his countrymen did not abandon the plan. Barros records that John II sent many messengers to the princes of the interior behind Senegambia, and that among them was a certain Rodrigo Rabelo, who made his way up the Gambia to the land of Mandi Mansa, the Sultan of Mandi, or Mali, sometimes referred to as the King of Timbuktu¹. So it would appear that when the Senegal route proved difficult, the Portuguese tried instead to sail up the Gambia. In point of fact,

¹ *Asia*, dec. 1, bk. 3, ch. 12: 'At other times', writes Barros, 'he [John II] sent, by the river Cantor (the Gambia), to Mandi Mansa, one of the most powerful of that part of the province of Mandinga. On this mission went one Rodrigo Rabelo, a squire of his household.'

neither route was very easy to negotiate. Navigation of the Senegal was dangerous at all times, in the wet season owing to the turbulence of the flood waters and in the dry season because of exposed rocks and sandbanks, while the navigation of the Gambia was impeded at Barraconda during the dry season by a ledge of rocks, which the Portuguese tried in vain to remove¹. Despite these difficulties, emissaries from King John II penetrated the interior, reached Timbuktu, and founded a tradition of friendliness between the Mandingoës of the declining empire of Mali and the Portuguese, which lasted for nearly two generations. Barros tells us that, when in 1534 he sent Pero Fernandes to negotiate with the ruler of Mali about the affairs of the trade of Cantor, his agent was readily welcomed, because of the friendship which had existed between his countrymen and the negroes of Mali since the reign of John II². It may well be, indeed, that after the death of John II many unrecorded journeys were made by Portuguese travellers and traders from the Senegambia coast up the rivers into the interior. We do know that as late as 1565, although at that time the position of the Portuguese on the Senegal was fast becoming untenable owing to French rivalry, another attempt was made by a certain Diogo Carreiro to make his way up this river to Timbuktu. On 29 March 1565 he wrote to King Sebastian of Portugal, reporting on his progress:

I have pacified all the chief kings here, and in the name of your highness I was liberal in distributing gifts among them. I have learned all about the river and the road of Tumbuqutu is open and clear, and—God willing—when this reaches your highness, I shall have arrived there and be on my way back, in such a way that, after passing the Azenegues, the Tuquorois, and the Fulos, I shall reach the Guineos of the city of Gana, the most thickly populated metropolis of Tumboqutu. . . . From this branch of the Nilo in Canaga³.

No other evidence is available to show whether Carreiro ever accomplished his purpose. This letter is our only source of in-

¹ *Asia*, dec. 1, bk. 3, ch. 8.

² *Asia*, dec. 1, bk. 3, ch. 12.

³ Sousa Viterbo, I, 322-4. The 'Tuquorois' were presumably the Tucolors, who during the eleventh century inhabited the kingdom of Tekrur athwart the Senegal and west of Ghana. This people was afterwards driven southwards by the Berbers to their present home in Futa. See Bovill, p. 63.

formation about the journey which he was planning. So it cannot be proved that he reached the empire of Mali or Timbuktu. Nevertheless, the letter has some historical value. As we have seen, it shows that the Portuguese were still in 1565 trying to find their way to Timbuktu and more especially to the gold mines of the famous Wangara. This region was apparently situated near the source of the Senegal, and in former times merchants from the once-flourishing market of the ancient Ghana had visited the mines to buy gold. The form of the letter also suggests that Carreiro, in spite of his claims, knew little more than his predecessors about the secrets of the interior. He repeated the mistake of all his contemporaries, when he addressed his report from 'this branch of the Nile in Senegal', and he appears to have been under the impression that Ghana was still the greatest city of the western Sudan, whereas, in fact, that city had been destroyed in the early years of the thirteenth century¹. The phrases he used, indeed, show that the Portuguese, in spite of their intermittent correspondence with the Sultan of Mali, were never able to learn the truth about the political and economic situation within the interior of Guinea.

The expedition to the Senegal in 1488 was an event of importance, illustrating in all its aspects the far-sighted character of the imperialist policy of King John II. It was an example of his interference with advantage to himself in native politics. It was a realistic attempt, under the camouflage of a crusade, to enthrone a puppet ruler in the Jalofo kingdom. It formed the central part of a scheme to open up a direct route between Lisbon and Timbuktu, and to divert the northern stream of trade from the western Sudan down the Senegal to the Guinea coast. Even the plan that Pero Vaz should build a fort on negro soil to be held by the Portuguese was unusual, because policy and profit demanded that as few forts as possible should be erected. We know that John II was responsible for an abortive attempt to fortify Sierra Leone (doc. 5), but there is no evidence that any other forts were built anywhere in northern Guinea before the middle of the sixteenth century. The reason for this

was that the Portuguese put their trust in a policy of peaceful penetration. They negotiated treaties of amity with native princes, such as the treaty of peace concluded in 1481 between Pero de Evora and Prince Bezeguiche, who was lord of the coast south of Cape Verde¹; they sent ambassadors to the more important native potentates; via Arguim, the Senegal and the Gambia, they despatched envoys to the powerful princes of the interior; and they founded small, scattered, white settlements far and wide among the negro peoples, intermarrying and living with them and occasionally trying to convert them. All this they preferred to a policy of coercion and force, which would have been costly and dangerous. Their chief purpose, in short, was to promote trade.

Trade thus came to be the principal medium through which the Portuguese extended their influence. The Guinea trade was encouraged and organised by the granting of regional monopolies. The Guinea coast was divided into a number of 'trades'², each 'trade' representing a prescribed district along the coast. These trades, or 'contracts', were publicly auctioned in Lisbon. The merchants, who received a given contract, were described as the 'contractors'³, because they contracted to pay the king a yearly rent for their exclusive trading rights. The number and the identity of these trades are uncertain, and it would appear that they varied from time to time. An anonymous Portuguese pilot, writing before the middle of the sixteenth century, alleged that the entire coast was divided into 'two parts', and that each 'part' was farmed out every four or five years to the highest bidder (doc. 62). But this was untrue. Upper Guinea alone contained at least five contracts, known respectively as Arguim, Senegal, Gambia and Cantor, the 'Rivers of Guinea', and Sierra Leone.

The trade of the first of these, Arguim, has already been described. Contractors in the second, the trade of the Senegal, sent their ships up the river to buy slaves and gold from Jalofo mer-

¹ *Asia*, dec. 1, bk. 3, ch. 1.

² 'Trato(s)'; e.g. the term '*trato da Serra Leoa*' was regularly used to describe the 'trade' or 'contract' of Sierra Leone.

³ 'Tratador(es)' or 'contratador(es)'; e.g. the '*tratadores da Serra Leoa*' were the contractors who rented the trade of Sierra Leone.

chants, living on the south bank, and from merchants of the inland kingdom of Tekrur¹. More important was the trade of Gambia and Cantor (docs. 15, 31, 35). Navigation up the Gambia was easier than up the Senegal, and so the contractors were able to send their ships farther upstream to the district of Cantor, where there was a famous barter, and towards the interior. Pacheco affirms that his countrymen visited the native fair at Setuoco, where they could buy slaves and a considerable quantity of gold from the Mandingoës². The comparative importance of the Gambia trade as against that of the Senegal may also be gauged by the fact that the rent paid for the former was higher than that for the latter. After the middle of the sixteenth century, however, the Portuguese were forced to abandon the greater part of their trade with Senegambia, owing to competition and strife with French and English interlopers, and they then began to concentrate upon the development of the trade of the region south of the Gambia³. The term 'trade of the Rivers of Guinea' appears to have been employed in the reign of King Manuel to describe the commerce of this very indented part of the coast south of the Gambia. The contract of the 'Rivers', therefore, probably included the trade of the Casamanca, the Farim, the Geba and the Grande. South of this, of course, was the contract of Sierra Leone. Fragile though the records are, an investigation of them shows that in 1511 each one of these 'trades'—Senegal, Gambia and Cantor, the 'Rivers', and Sierra Leone—was in farm (doc. 31). By this method the government tried to encourage the exchange of goods in Guinea.

It may be observed, however, that sometimes the same merchant, or group of merchants, rented more than one of the trades simultaneously. For example, in this very year 1511, a certain Francisco Martinz was contractor not only in the Senegal trade but also in that of the 'Rivers'. This was a natural development. If a wealthy trader were at all interested in Guinea, it was to be expected that he would try to get as

¹ *Esmraldo*, bk. 1, ch. 27.

² *Esmraldo*, bk. 1, ch. 29.

³ J. W. Blake, *European beginnings in West Africa, 1454-1578* (1937), pp. 182, 191.

much of its commerce into his own hands as possible¹. The reader may also observe that the contractors were not all Portuguese. Many were Jews, some were Italians and some Spaniards. Thus, Christovão de Haro, and his brother Diego, partners in 1514 in a company founded to rent the trade of Sierra Leone (doc. 35) and afterwards contractors with King Manuel of Portugal 'to have the privilege of pursuing trade for a few years in certain rivers of Guinea'², were members of a Spanish family and came originally from Burgos. Moreover, it would seem that, after 1521, one group of contractors generally enjoyed sole rights of trade with all Upper Guinea, and that this concession was called the contract of the 'Rivers of Guinea'. If this is true, it would explain the statement of the *ci-devant* anonymous pilot. Evidence in support of it may be found in a record of certain proceedings in Lisbon on 8 July 1568 before the judge responsible for the affairs of India and Guinea. The injured petitioners were two Portuguese merchants, Antonio Gonçalves de Guzman and Duarte Leo. They were described as 'the present farmers of the customs and contracts in the region of the green promontory, commonly called Cabo Verde, and in the rivers and maritime shore of Guinea', and, elsewhere, as 'the contractors and farmers of the green promontory, which is called in Portugal Cabo Verde, and of the maritime shore of Guinea, of Saint Dominico³, and Serra Lyoa'⁴. These men thus appear to have been contractors in the whole trade of northern Guinea. Moreover, from the evidence given during the proceedings, it is clear that they had held these privileges at least since 1562. Also, they employed factors who were permanently resident in Guinea, some of them evidently being Jews. Thus, one Marcus Fernandes was 'chief of the contract in the Rio Grande', while Simon Leão was an officer of theirs in a native port on the

¹ The business connection of a certain Affonso de Torres exemplifies this. Affonso was a contractor in the 'trades of Guinea', by which was probably meant the trade of Upper Guinea (doc. 57), farmer of the customs of the Cape Verde islands (doc. 67), contractor in the trade of the island of São Thomé (doc. 70), and one whose advice the government sought on matters touching Guinea (doc. 56).

² *Alguns documentos*, pp. 397-8.

⁴ PRO, SP 70/99, ff. 1, 2.

³ R. Farim.

Farim called Begundo¹. Gonçalves and his partner, like many other traders, thus transacted business in Guinea through the medium of resident agents.

These factors and their associates, together with Capverdians who settled on the mainland, were, indeed, the chief agencies responsible for the spread of Portuguese habits and influences among the native peoples of northern Guinea. It is true, as we have seen, that there were others—the explorer, the missionary and the slave-dealer—but these men of trade played a more important part in the policy of peaceful penetration. They were, so to speak, the men on the spot. They lived in the negro towns and villages. Their knowledge of the natives was intimate and extensive, for they talked with them constantly, taught them their own language, intermarried with them, made their homes with them, and brought up children among them. Miscegenation became the rule. Yet they never forgot their white blood, and, though sometimes unbaptised, they always claimed to be Christians. They remained proud of their ancestry, and, if they intermingled, they were not absorbed. Their 'proud nature and haughty behaviour' was a frequent source of remark, and sometimes of complaint, among the nationals of other European states who afterwards visited Nigritia². Whatever their shortcomings, however, they acquired a special standing in the eyes of some of the native princes, so that some of them were able to marry into the ruling families, while others, acting for themselves and their families, concluded treaties, or made advantageous agreements with local chiefs³. To these pioneers, therefore, we must chiefly attribute the use of Portuguese as a *lingua franca* in the coastal trade and the long survival in parts of Nigritia of Portuguese influence.

¹ PRO, SP 70/95, ff. 261b, 263.

² 'By the Portingalls' proude nature and haughtie behaviour to Englishe-men in Ginea', complained Anthony Dassell in 1591, 'we have bine reputed as vassalles to them and . . . much abused' (PRO, HCA 24/59, nos. 17-20).

³ Hakluyt (*Principal navigations*, VII, 98) records, for example, that in 1591 there was a Portuguese, who lived far up the Senegal, married to the daughter of one of the native kings. Captain Almada (*Tratado*, pp. 45-6) describes how in 1585 a certain Manuel Lopes Cardoso obtained permission from King Chapala, the local chief, to construct a fort in Cacheo. This settler, at that time living in Cacheo, appears to have acted on his own without any help from the Portuguese government.

SÃO JORGE DA MINA AND THE MINA COAST. The most important settlement held by the Portuguese on the mainland of Guinea beyond Sierra Leone was the fortified city of São Jorge da Mina (Saint George of the Mine). From this station they dominated the Mina and Malagueta coasts. The coast of Mina (the Mine), so called because it was a gold-producing region, extended roughly for 150 miles, from Axim south-eastwards to Cabo das Tres Pontas (Cape Three Points) and then in an east-north-easterly direction to the Rio da Volta¹. The city of São Jorge was situated a few miles east of the cape, and there were a few small forts and trading posts east and west of the city and subordinate to it, the more important being Axim, Samma and (later) Accra. The Malagueta coast, according to Pacheco², ran from Sierra Leone to Cape Palmas, but we may observe that the name Malagueta was often used by the Portuguese to describe the whole of the intervening coastline from Sierra Leone to Mina, because they had no special name for the Ivory coast. Malagueta took its name from the chief local product, a pungent spice, like pepper, which was called 'malagueta'³. Portuguese influence throughout this part of the Guinea coast—that is, from Sierra Leone to the Rio da Volta—emanated almost entirely from São Jorge da Mina.

The fortress of São Jorge was built in 1482. It was the first white settlement on the Mina coast. Previously since 1471—the year of the momentous discoveries of Fernão Gomes—the gold trade of Mina must have been pursued by a direct exchange of goods between the native merchants in their *almadias* (canoes) and the Portuguese in their ships anchored at a safe distance from the shore⁴. Trade in the beginning was evidently very

¹ Pacheco (*Esmeraldo*, bk. 2, ch. 6) writes that the Cabo das Redes (Fetta Point) was 'the last place on this coast where . . . there is gold'. But it was more usual to consider the Volta as the eastern limit of the Gold Coast.

² *Esmeraldo*, bk. 2, ch. 3.

³ Malagueta pepper (Guinea grains, or 'grains of paradise') was extracted from the shrub *Aframomum malagueta*. For a short account of the trade pursued by the Portuguese, see Blake, pp. 83-4.

⁴ Several references to this method of trading are made in the accounts of the first and second voyages of William Towerson to Guinea, printed below, pp. 372-4, 404, 408.

profitable, for Gomes made a fortune. But the method of trading was on the whole hazardous and fortuitous, and there was no security against the intervention of unlicensed raiders¹. For these reasons, King John II held a meeting of his council to examine whether it would be practicable to build a fort on the Mina coast. Though various objections were raised, the king, who disliked opposition, determined to proceed with the plan, and gave orders for the preparation of an expedition. He chose Diogo d'Azambuja, a distinguished knight of his household, to command it, ordering him to seek out a suitable site on the coast and erect the fortress. D'Azambuja set sail on 12 December 1481, taking with him a great quantity of timber, hewn stone, lime, tiles, bricks, tools, nails, munitions and provisions, 100 craftsmen and 500 soldiers. After reconnoitring the coastline, he disembarked on 19 January 1482 at the native village of Two Parts, and, on the following day, in a picturesque palaver with the local native chief, Caramansa, applied for permission to build a fort on his land. This Caramansa at first refused, but after further discussion granted, not without misgivings; and d'Azambuja's men then began to lay the foundations. The negroes, however, were secretly opposed to the undertaking, and they placed many obstacles in the way of the Portuguese, attacking them and depriving them of a supply of fresh water. D'Azambuja was, therefore, obliged to try every trick of bribery, persuasion and cajolery to appease them and even to burn the native village once, and he issued special instructions to his men to concentrate before all else upon the building of the tower of the fort, his idea being apparently that, if a garrison could be placed in the tower, other building operations could be carried out in conditions of greater security. The difficulty of his task was thus increased. Yet the castle was at length finished, the encircling wall completed, and a garrison of 60 men housed within. D'Azambuja then appears to have turned his attention to the no less difficult business of governing the fort, perhaps associating the negroes of the adjacent town with the whites in the fort in vassalage to the King of Portugal, and, as governor of São Jorge, stabilising his relations with the neighbouring

¹ Blake, pp. 58-64.

tribes. The chronicler, Pina, briefly records that d'Azambuja, after having imposed taxes upon the gold trade,

remained in the castle for two years and seven months, during which he set up a gallows and a pillory, and made other ordinances and agreements with the negroes.

It is thus evident that rules for the administration of justice and the punishment of offenders were drawn up in the castle. The first captain returned to Portugal in 1484, where he was rewarded for his services. By a royal decree, issued on 15 March 1486, Mina was granted the privileges of a city.

The historian, Barros, and the chronicler, Ruy de Pina, have left picturesque, if prejudiced, accounts of the foundation of São Jorge da Mina. The latter's position at the court of King John II allowed him an opportunity to collect materials for his three chronicles of the lives of Kings Duarte, Affonso V and John II. He was some forty years of age, when d'Azambuja built the castle of São Jorge. Shortly afterwards, he became secretary to the royal court, and in 1497 chief chronicler of Portugal. Because of these qualifications, his works are in some respects more valuable, as a record of events, than the *Asia* of Barros. While Barros was the abler scholar and could, as factor of the Casa de Guiné, draw more freely upon documentary records, Pina lived at the time of the events which he recorded, moved among the men concerned in them, and was himself an actor in some of them. His account of d'Azambuja's expedition to Mina thus has all the advantages of contemporaneity. Barros wrote long after the event and did not hesitate to make use of Pina¹. On the other hand, Pina took no actual part in the expedition of 1482. His record was compiled from the accounts of others. Nor was he impartial. While he was no flatterer, he was yet a loyal Portuguese official, and his narrative of d'Azambuja's dealings with Caramansa is undoubtedly highly coloured in favour of his own countrymen. The building of the castle was recorded in chapter two of the chronicle of King John II, the best of Pina's chronicles (doc. 4).

¹ The narrative of Barros may be read in the *Asia*, dec. 1, bk. 3, chs. 1 and 2.

Although today we can only read the biased accounts by the Portuguese chroniclers of what happened upon this occasion, it is clear even from what they say that the fortress of São Jorge was erected in the teeth of strong native opposition. 'There was much trouble with the negroes, who wished to prevent the work,' wrote Pacheco, 'but it was finally finished, despite them'¹. King Caramansa would have preferred to have been left alone. He did not trust the invader, and he did not wish to see the Portuguese establish themselves in a fortified post on his territory. The story of his relations with d'Azambuja is significant, because it exemplifies the developing spirit of Portuguese rule on the Gold Coast. Whereas in Nigritia the guiding principles were peaceful penetration and miscegenation, on the Gold Coast they were force and sometimes fraud. In Nigritia the Portuguese intermarried widely with the indigenous peoples and this was not discouraged by the authorities, but on the Gold Coast they remained in their forts and trading posts on the whole apart and separate from the natives. In Nigritia the Portuguese entered into friendly relations with negro princes upon terms of equality, but on the Gold Coast the rule was for them to terrify the tribes into submission. As a result, while in Nigritia Portuguese settlers could pass from village to village and from kingdom to kingdom in comparative security and be welcomed among the negroes as friendly traders, travelling overland for great distances through little-known country, on the Gold Coast the Portuguese garrisons were obliged for the most part to stay within their forts, moving between them in arms and at some personal risk, and they had to use the sea as their main line of communication from one fort to another. These differences, while not absolute, were generally true. So, while Portuguese influence in Nigritia was extensive, it was limited on the Gold Coast by the surrounds and walls of a very few stations. This contrast between the character of the empire in northern Guinea and that on the Mina coast was to some degree the outcome of d'Azambuja's negotiations with Caramansa. Force was used at the outset to subjugate the negroes of Mina, and thereafter it became the predominant note in Portuguese policy. It is thus literally true to

¹ *Esmeraldo*, bk. 2, ch. 5.

say that São Jorge da Mina dominated life on the Gold Coast under the Portuguese.

During their occupation of Mina, the Portuguese did not own the ground on which the castle and the city of São Jorge were situated. Their title to it was only conditional. They held it on lease from the local tribes. The castle had been built on a rocky headland to the south-west of the estuary of a small stream, called in the seventeenth century the R. Benja. This stream divided the land of the Comani people from that of the Fetu. The Comani inhabited the kingdom of Commenda, which lay to the west of Mina, while the Fetu lived in the land east of Mina. The rulers of these two peoples appear to have claimed an equal share in the ownership of the territory on which the castle stood. 'Anciently the village of the Mine had two masters', wrote Olfert Dapper at the end of the seventeenth century, 'one half dependent upon the King of Guasso¹ and the other half upon that of Fetu'². According to the text of a 'Note', which afterwards fell into the hands of the Denkiras, a powerful people living in the interior behind Mina, d'Azambuja negotiated a treaty with Prince Caramansa by which he engaged his countrymen to pay a yearly rent for the lease of the territory on which the castle was built. Whether this 'note' was genuine cannot be established, for it was rediscovered in the seventeenth century, when policy was responsible for many inventions about the early history of white enterprise on the Gold Coast³. But there is evidence to substantiate that during the early part of the sixteenth century the Portuguese in the fort of São Jorge found it expedient to cultivate the friendship of the kings of the Fetu and the Comani, and that they were in the habit of giving 'presents' to some of the local native princes, a practice which may be regarded as a form of paying rent or tribute. Several records have been included in this collection which offer proof of this (docs. 16, 28, 45, 46, 141). Two may be specially selected for notice. In 1503, the captain of São Jorge da Mina sent one, Diogo d'Alvarenga, to 'confirm the friendship' with the king of

¹ Great Commenda, the chief town of the kingdom of Commenda.

² Dapper, *Description de l'Afrique* (1686), p. 283.

³ Blake, p. 99.

the Comani, a friendship which was doubtless based on an annual tribute (doc. 16). When seventeen years later the famous Pacheco was governor of São Jorge, he ordered a present to be given to one of the knights of Fetu, because this would advance the service of the King of Portugal (doc. 46). The strictly legal position was, therefore, that the Portuguese held their territorial concession by grace of the local negro kings. In practice, of course, they would have resisted any attempt on the part of the Comani or the Fetu to expel them.

Under the walls of the castle to the west lay the large native town of Dondou¹. This was the land side of the castle, and from this side it was most vulnerable. Accordingly, the Portuguese took the negroes of the town under their special protection. They did not try to impose their own laws upon these Mina Blacks, allowing them instead a wide measure of self-government. Authority in municipal affairs was placed in the hands of native governors, known as '*brassos*', assisted by various minor officials. The town was divided into three wards, and a governor appointed over each ward. The Portuguese detribalised the inhabitants of the town, and then in return undertook to arm and defend them from their neighbours, the Comani and the Fetu. The Mina Blacks did not resist the policy of their protectors, and they were organised into a formidable fighting force whose reputation came to be high all along the Mina coast. The town was a sort of self-governing republic. Contemporaries describe it as the Commonwealth of Mina. Barbot's description of it, as he saw it in 1682, is worth quoting:

The town is divided into three distinct parts, as if it were three large villages near one another; each part or ward is governed by its respective *brasso*; which *brasso* or governor is assisted by a *caboceiro*, and some other inferior officers, who administer justice and have charge of the political state: and these, all together, compose the regency of the little republic, ever since the Portuguese made it independent of the kings of Commando and of Fetu, who formerly were masters of it by equal halves. This happened some few years before the Dutch

¹ This was the native name for Mina town. It was sometimes written 'Dana' and sometimes 'Oddena'.

conquered the castle of Mina from the Portuguese; who from that time till they were turned out of the place, did protect and defend the town from the attempts of the said kings, when they attempted to reduce it to their obedience; and were to assist the inhabitants with forces when necessity required: by which means the Mina Blacks became formidable and dreaded by their neighbours¹.

Barbot maintains that the Portuguese took the town under their protection 'some few years' before 1637, which was the year when the Dutch captured São Jorge da Mina. In point of fact, the policy of detribalisation and association with the garrison of the castle was adopted soon after the Portuguese established themselves on the Gold Coast. Contemporary evidence, if exiguous, is yet suggestive. Pacheco, writing at the beginning of the sixteenth century, records that already at that time many of the negroes, living near the castle, had become Christians². The first definite reference to the Mina Blacks, however, may be found in a letter written by King John III of Portugal to Afonso de Albuquerque, the governor of São Jorge, on 13 October 1523. The king deplored the depopulation of the town, which had resulted from the governor's harsh treatment of 'the knights of our village of Mina'. He drew Albuquerque's attention to the fact that the negroes of the town were Christians, that they bought goods from the factory of the castle for sale on the coast, and that their departure might have an adverse effect upon the trade and welfare of São Jorge da Mina. Above all, he reminded him to defend and protect them, 'since they are our vassals and live there in obedience to us and to you and to our captains of that city' (doc. 49)³. This letter makes it clear that the Mina Blacks were certainly organised as the friends and allies of the Portuguese by 1523. If, moreover, there was at that time any serious tendency for them to drift away out of the

¹ J. Barbot, *Description of the coasts of North and South Guinea* (1732), p. 155.

² *Esmeraldo*, bk. 2, ch. 5.

³ William Bosman relates in his *Description of Guinea* (1754) an interesting and similar example of the temporary desertion of the town by the blacks in 1685, in this case due to plague and harsh rule by the governor (p. 38). For further light on this native method of passively revenging themselves upon unpopular whites, see E. C. Martin, *The British West African settlements, 1750-1821* (1927), pp. 50-52.

town, it was checked, because in 1557 they were again the staunch allies of their overlords. When the English interloper, William Towerson, happened to approach close to the castle of São Jorge, the negroes:

... straightway . . . set forth an Almade to descry us, and when they perceived that we were no Portugals, they ranne within the towne againe: for there is a great towne by the castle which is called by the negros Dondou¹.

By 1559 it was well known even in England that the Mina Blacks would assist in the defence of São Jorge da Mina against any common enemy. In that year, Henry Strangewyse, the pirate, planned an attack upon the castle, which he knew was most vulnerable upon the town side. His scheme was, therefore, 'firste to have taken y^e towne and eftsoones y^e castle'². Better proof than all this that the commonwealth of Mina had been organised by the Portuguese already early in the sixteenth century could scarcely be offered. Its position was unique. It served as a centre for the spread of Portuguese influence around Mina, and yet the neighbouring tribes regarded the semi-civilised Mina Blacks with suspicion and hostility. The district of the town was the only place on the Gold Coast where the Portuguese seriously encouraged intermarriage between whites and blacks³.

São Jorge da Mina was a royal castle, and its affairs, therefore, were supervised by the King of Portugal. Much of his time was given to various aspects of this business, such as the appointment of officers, the negotiation of friendly relations between the garrison and the Mina Blacks, the sending of instructions to the officers of the Casa de Guiné relating to the provisioning and protection of the residents in the castle, or arranging for the arrival and departure of the Mina fleets (docs. 52, 54, 59, 69). But life in the castle was directed and controlled in detail by the governor, who was responsible for its welfare to the king. The

¹ Hakluyt, *Principal navigations*, vi, 216.

² PRO, HCA 1/35, 13 August 1559.

³ The name of Diogo Lopes Auxy, a resident in the city of São Jorge da Mina in 1520, suggests that this knight may have been a noble mulatto of Mina town (doc. 43).

governorship of São Jorge was not exactly one of the plums of the colonial service, but it was sometimes offered to men whom the king desired to reward for long years of service overseas. Celebrated names thus figure in the list of governors. The authority of the governor was wide and his duties were heavy and manifold. He held office generally for about three years, and during this period he was expected to enforce the royal ordinances relating to trade and administration on the Mina coast, to safeguard and protect the gold trade against interlopers, hostile tribes, smugglers and thieves, to send a series of reports home so that the king might be kept informed of the general situation on the coast and in the castle, and to notify him of unusual events (doc. 43), to keep a friendly eye on affairs in Mina town, to watch over the needs of subordinate forts and factories (docs. 42, 44), and above all to regulate as far as possible on a peaceful footing relations between the garrison and the neighbouring tribes.

He was a virtual sovereign during his tenure of the post, but his responsibility was more than usually heavy, because Mina was far from Portugal and the members of the garrison were apt to model their conduct upon his. The perils and the opportunities of his position called for great powers of tact, of initiative, and most of all of self-discipline. The temptation was strong for a governor to abandon himself to licentious living and the pursuit of private gain instead of devoting himself sternly to duty. Private trade by members of the garrison was permissible, on condition that the usual customs were paid to the crown; but the singular privileges of a governor allowed him, if he chose, to trade secretly, or, at a price, to condone secret trade on the part of his subordinates. This failing of some of the governors of São Jorge was notorious. The chronicler Resende describes how, when King John II sent Lopo Soares to Mina, he warned him not to be so foolish as to return a ruined man, for, adds the chronicler, the king was very jealous for his profits from Mina, and paid his officers large salaries, but those who plundered the king's property by illegal trading were heavily punished¹. The misdoings of governors were sometimes ex-

¹ Resende, *Chronica que trata da vida do D. João II*, ch. 177.

posed. The case of Duarte Pacheco Pereira is perhaps the most interesting. Pacheco was governor from 1520 to 1522. In the latter year he was replaced and recalled in disgrace. When he reached Lisbon, he was imprisoned, because he had broken certain regulations governing the duties of his office. But he was afterwards released, because, upon investigation, it was found that the majority of the charges levelled against him were false and that he was only guilty of minor malversations¹. His recall is particularly significant, because it exemplifies one of the exceptional difficulties with which a governor of the castle had to contend. In the fierce struggle for promotion, personal enmities and petty jealousies were common, and these evils were aggravated by carefully phrased hints and suggestions in letters sent home by different officers in the castle. If, on the one hand, the governor in his letters to the king could report confidentially upon his subordinates, on the other hand, the factor, the chief magistrate, or the captains of the returning Mina fleets, in their respective reports could defend themselves and attack their personal enemies. There was much back-biting and much misrepresentation, and the governor, whose wider powers and heavier responsibilities exposed him to special criticism, was sometimes an unfortunate victim. The home government tried to check maladministration by elaborate regulations, by giving special instructions to the governors, and by setting guards upon the caravels which sailed to Mina (docs. 20, 47)². But abuses were never stamped out. The cancer of corruption gradually spread from member to member of the garrison, reducing its efficiency and undermining its prestige in the eyes of the negroes.

Trade in the 'lodge', or factory, of São Jorge was supervised and directed by the chief factor, who had to render an account of all receipts and expenses during his period of office to the king (doc. 23). His duties included keeping a full record of all transactions, carrying out the orders of the governor, sending many reports to the king on conditions in the trade, and corre-

¹ Damião de Goes, *Chronica do felicissimo Rei D. Manoel* (1566-7), pt. I, ch. 100.

² The royal ordinances may be examined in *As Ordenações del Rey D. Manoel* (1521), bk. 5, ff. 83, 91-7, and in *Leys e provisões del Rei D. Sebastião* (1816-52), pt. I, vol. I, pp. 13-18, 166-94.

sponding with the officers of the Casa de Guiné on commercial matters (docs. 23, 40, 42, 45, 50, 71). Gold was the chief commodity secured by barter from the native merchants of Mina, and during the years 1482-1530 very large quantities were sent to Portugal (doc. 14)¹. It was obtained in exchange for a variety of goods, notably brightly coloured cloth, striped cloth, old linen, slaves, beads, shells, kettles, and brass and copper pots, pans and bracelets (docs. 17, 23). One-twentieth of all gold was surrendered to the crown (doc. 31). The gold was stored in warehouses in the factory until the arrival of the large annual Mina fleets from Portugal (docs. 14, 54). The negroes were very proud of the old clothes which they obtained for their gold, and the barter in old clothes and linens was so extensive that a special officer was appointed in the castle to take charge of 'the factory of old linen' (docs. 16, 17, 20, 41). They also gladly bought slaves, for many of them appear to have travelled long distances down to the coast from the gold-bearing regions of Ashanti, and they needed the help of carriers to take their purchases on their return up-country. The Portuguese, therefore, brought slaves from the coast of Benin, the island of São Thomé, and even as far away as Arguim fort to supply this demand at Mina (docs. 39, 40)². During the golden age of the empire, the Mina trade was very prosperous, and the chief factor held a lucrative office of importance and distinction.

Besides the governor and the factors, there were a few other officials, such as the chief magistrate, the accountant, and the clerks, and there was at least one priest whose duty it was to attend to the spiritual needs of the garrison. When the castle had been founded, the chapel had been built outside the walls. But at the end of the sixteenth century it was removed and erected inside the walls of the fort. The reason for this was that Santiago hill, on which the chapel originally stood, overlooked the castle from the west and was a favourable spot from which to direct fire upon the garrison³. The dismantling of the first

¹ For an account of the gold traffic, see Blake, pp. 80-3.

² *Asia*, dec. 1, bk. 3, ch. 3.

³ Dapper, *Description*, p. 281; P. D. Marees, *Beschryvinge ende historische verhael van het Gout-custē van Guinea* (1602), chs. 49, 50.

chapel was significant. The spiritual needs of the small garrison were always subordinated to the exigencies of policy, and the scanty records at our disposal suggest that the whites were more interested in wine, mulatto women, and profits from gold, than in the salvation of their souls. Martin Frobisher did not jibe merely in the embittered spirit of one who had been imprisoned in the castle, when he declared in 1562 that:

... except it be that thay have masse nowe and then within the castell, to the which a verey fewe of the said enhabitantes who have been trayned up of children doo sometyme come, there is no other preest nor preacher to convert or instruct anyone to the christian faith (doc. 141).

Bombardiers and cross-bowmen seem to have formed the main part of the garrison, which was never very large. In 1482, d'Azambuja had retained the services of only sixty men, and during the years to 1560 the number rarely, if ever, much exceeded this. But the defenders of São Jorge could always reinforce themselves by drawing upon the trained warriors of Mina town, while their weapons were superior to those of hostile negroes. As a result, though the Portuguese occupied the fort for as long as 155 years, they were only once seriously imperilled by a purely native attack. In 1570, the Fetu and the Comani combined in an assault upon them, but the defences of the garrison were sufficient to enable the Portuguese to hold out even against this alliance between traditional enemies¹.

The position of the Portuguese on the coast was in some respects very unsatisfactory. Their tenure of the Mina concession depended primarily upon their own power to hold it and secondly upon the goodwill of the neighbouring tribes. It is true that they had allies in the Mina Blacks, and that they could strengthen their position by playing upon the divisions among the negroes, particularly the rivalry between their nearest neighbours, the Fetu and the Comani. But the small garrisons in their forts entirely relied for arms, provisions and reinforcements upon the safe and regular arrival of ships from Portugal. Moreover, they had to make sure of a supply of fresh water

¹ Marees, *Beschryvinge*, ch. 19.

during the dry season by storing rain water in huge cisterns during the wet months. A long and anxious period was experienced between March, when the annual fleet returned home, and September, when the next fleet set out from Portugal, because, during the initial years of their occupation of the coast, ships from Portugal only visited them during the winter months. Furthermore, their position became much more serious, when interlopers from France and England began to appear off the coast and to incite the negroes against them.

In these circumstances, the governor of the Portuguese stations could little afford to antagonise the more powerful tribes, who lived on the Mina coast. No contemporary description of the Gold Coast, compiled on the same detailed scale as Barbot's later work, has yet come to light to enable these tribes to be identified. But there are occasional references to them, and to their villages and towns, in contemporary records and maps. By collating these with the statements of later writers, it is possible to obtain a skeleton picture of the negro kingdoms on the Gold Coast during the early part of the sixteenth century. Barbot, and other writers, enumerate the following as the most important in their time: the kingdom of Axim west of Cape Three Points, and beyond the cape from west to east the kingdoms of Ahanta, Yabi, Commenda, Fetu, Saboe, Fanti, Akron, Agonna and Accra¹. If we now turn from the writers of the seventeenth century to records and maps of the period 1500-60, we find that the latter contain, in addition to many references to towns and villages along the coast, clear references to the kingdoms of Axim, Ahanta, Commenda, Fetu, Saboe and Fanti, and doubtful ones to Yabi. Moreover, wherever it is possible from a reference to locate any one of these villages, towns or kingdoms, its situation in the sixteenth century appears to have been the same as in the following century. All this suggests that the distribution of tribes and kingdoms on the Gold Coast was not substantially changed by war, invasion or migration during the intervening period.

It will be well to summarise the more important evidence upon which this conclusion is based. Pacheco supplies much of

¹ Barbot, *Description*, bk. 3; Bosman, *Description*, letters 1-5.

it in his *Esmeraldo*. He describes 'the country of Axem [Axim]' west of Cape Three Points, and east of the cape 'the region of Anda [Ahanta]', 'a town called Samaa [Samma in the kingdom of Yabi] of some 500 inhabitants', 'the village of Torto [Little Commenda]', Cabo Corço [Queen Anne Point], 'Sabuu o pequeno [Little Saboe]', 'Fante o grande and Fante pequeno [Great Fanti and Little Fanti, villages on the coast of the kingdom of Fanti]', and Cabo das Redes [Fetta Point]. He admits that he did not know much about the country east of Fetta Point, for his countrymen had not traded with the negroes of this region, which he calls Mumu¹. These references show that in his day the Portuguese were very familiar with the coast between Axim and Fetta Point. It may be supposed that the details in the *Esmeraldo* did not by any means represent the full extent of their knowledge, for Pacheco's work was not a gazetteer of all the known places on the Guinea coast, but a manual of navigation, containing only those distinguishing features of the coastline which would enable the mariner to determine his position. Omissions from his book included, for example, any direct reference to the kingdoms of Commenda and Fetu. But he must have known these two countries, because only a year or two before he completed the *Esmeraldo*, his countrymen were engaged in negotiations with the rulers of these two kingdoms. One of the records, printed below, shows that in 1503 the governor of São Jorge da Mina was engaged in friendly discussions with the kings of Acomane [Commenda], Afuto [Fetu], and Aupya [Yabi?] (doc. 16). That the Comani people lived west of the castle in the sixteenth century is established by the fact that Pacheco locates the village of Torto, afterwards known as Little Commenda, between Samma and São Jorge². That the Fetu people inhabited the coast to the east of the castle may be deduced from the fact that Englishmen, trading at Mina during the years 1553-4, approached a town called Futta [Fetu], or Don John's town, which was situated near Cape Corea [Queen

¹ *Esmeraldo*, bk. 2, chs. 4 and 6.

² Confirmation of this is provided by a map of 1558 [B.M., Add. MS. 5415, A7], which locates the Aldea do Toço [Village of Torto or Little Commenda] between C. Tres Pontas [Cape Three Points] and O Castello [São Jorge da Mina].

Anne Point] (docs. 133, 141). Pacheco, as we have seen, confesses that in his day little trade was pursued on the coast between Fetta Point and the Rio da Volta, but if this was true in 1507, it was no longer so in the middle of this century, when English interlopers sailed to West Africa, piloted by Portuguese renegades. These pilots were certainly acquainted with this part of the coast. They guided their English masters unerringly to the more important trading resorts on the shores of the kingdoms of Saboe, Fanti and Agonna. Traffic was pursued, for example, at Mowri [Mouri] in Saboe, at the Fanti towns of Cormatin [Cormantin] and Perinnen [?], and at the towns of Laguo [Laguy], Weamba [Winneba], and Perecow Grand [Barracoe] in the kingdom of Agonna (doc. 145).

The above evidence, if not exhaustive, nevertheless suggests that the coast tribes occupied very much the same positions in the first half of the sixteenth century as they did long afterwards when Barbot and Bosman produced their works. It is more difficult to identify the tribes who lived behind the Gold Coast. The Portuguese knew very little about them, although Barros records that King John II sent an envoy via Mina to one of the kings of the Mandinga people¹. The records are silent about the interior, and, even if contemporary descriptions existed, it would not be very satisfactory to try to collate them with seventeenth-century narratives, because the warlike Sumbas, who seem to have migrated slowly across the country behind Mina and Malagueta during the middle of the sixteenth century, must have caused a serious dislocation among the existing kingdoms².

The negro tribes, who inhabited the Gold Coast, were able, if they wished, to inflict loss and damage upon the Portuguese in several ways. They could either make war upon them, like Prince Don John of Fetu, who 'had warres with the Portugals', or move away from the localities where the Portuguese were stationed and then refuse to trade with them (doc. 49), or close the trade-routes into the interior along which the merchants from the gold-producing regions of Denkira and Ashanti had to pass (docs. 16, 45), or interrupt trade by war among themselves (doc. 8), or finally give preference to interlopers and trade with

them, because the latter offered them cheaper rates and higher prices for their goods than Portuguese in the castle. The governors of São Jorge da Mina were therefore in continual negotiation with the negroes. Native policy was opportunist and unprincipled, to some extent depending upon local circumstances and to some extent conditioned by custom. Attempts were made to bind the Comani, the Fetu and the Aupya [Yabi?] in alliance with the Portuguese through the common bond of religion; but it is not without significance that, whenever this policy was tried, the Portuguese always first insisted upon taking into the castle as hostages of good faith a prominent member of the native king's court, perhaps his son, and the native king, on his side, generally met the proposal that he should become a convert with a desire for suitable presents. When such a proposal was made to the King of Fetu, for example, he replied by asking the Portuguese to build him a chapel and a house for himself and to present him with an ass, or a horse, and two trunks in which to keep his gold! (docs. 16, 28). Most of the Portuguese probably regarded missionary zeal as of only secondary importance. More important were the presents and gifts to keep the negroes quiet. Bribery, indeed, was a favourite method of pacifying them. Trade on the coast was nearly always preceded by the giving of small presents to the local chief in order to induce him to barter. Custom, moreover, decreed that certain princes should receive presents at regular intervals. Thus, in 1520, Pacheco, at that time the newly appointed governor of São Jorge, ordered gifts for the King of the Acames [Accanees?]¹, because 'this was the custom and they have to be given by order of our lord the king upon the arrival of his captains in this city [of São Jorge]' (doc. 45). Failing gentle methods, however, the Portuguese did not hesitate to terrorise the negroes into obedience and submission. They would send armed galleys along the coast, disembark, and burn the canoes and the houses of recalcitrant blacks, or take them prisoners and carry them to the castle, where they would enslave them. They often adopted this

¹ The Accanees lived behind the Fetu in the seventeenth century. They were famed as traders, bringing gold from Ashanti and Akim down to the coast (Bosman, *Description*, p. 68).

policy in order to stop the negroes trading with interlopers. The records of English voyages to Mina afford many instances of this policy and its results. 'The Portugales', declared one negro to the friendly English in 1556, 'were bad men, and . . . they made [the blacks] slaves if they could take them, and would put yrons upon their legges'; and when in 1558 William Towerson sent one of his pinnaces to buy gold at Ahanta, 'neither the captaine nor the negros durst traffike' for fear of the Portuguese (docs. 142, 145).

One further method of safeguarding themselves against the negroes remained to the Portuguese, and that was to build more forts. This they did. They erected a fort at each end of the Mina coast, but they never succeeded in fortifying the Malagueta coast¹. Axim fort, situated at the western end of the gold-bearing region, was built as early as 1503. Its importance was magnified by the fact that the negroes of Axim kingdom obtained quantities of gold from the inland region of Denkira, and that the King of Axim was in a position to close the trade-route down to the coast. Details of the vigorous traffic pursued by the Portuguese at Axim may be obtained from various records included in this volume (docs. 16, 18, 38, 44, 133). At the eastern end of the Mina coast, they built a fort at Accra, but there is very little reliable evidence of its existence before 1576². Their trading agents also established themselves in Samma, which according to tradition was first fortified in 1526³; it is certain that they had ordnance in this town by 1555 (doc. 133). These forts were subordinate to São Jorge da Mina, and their officers took orders from the governor of the castle, who was virtually also governor of all the Portuguese establishments on the Gold Coast. But if these forts were subordinate, they yet served a treble purpose, protecting the gold trade from interlopers, offering shelter and assistance to the galleys from the castle, when they cruised along the coast to punish a rebellious chief or drive off an interloper, and enabling the Portuguese to overawe the

¹ They made at least two attempts to establish forts on the Malagueta coast, one in 1532-3 (Blake, pp. 126-7), and a second in 1540 (docs. 64, 65, 66).

² Blake, p. 102.

³ P. Roussier, *L'établissement d'Issiny, 1687-1702* (1935), p. 10.

negroes. They emphasise, moreover, that the basis of Portuguese tenure at Mina was force. Their garrisons were small, but this was not a serious cause of anxiety, and, in any case, the governor of Mina could not afford to disperse his available manpower. His main force was always retained in São Jorge da Mina, which was more important than all the other minor posts combined. As long as the Portuguese controlled the castle, they remained the dominant white power on the Gold Coast. They held it until 1637, when the Dutch took it, and then the fragile imperial structure, based upon bribes, treaties, galleys and guns, which they had built up laboriously, immediately collapsed.

SÃO THOMÉ ISLAND AND THE GUINEA COAST FROM THE RIO DA VOLTA TO CAPE ST. CATHERINE. The extension of Portuguese influence on the mainland of Guinea around the bights of Benin and Biafra was effected largely by traders from the island of São Thomé. The story may be told in three parts: the discovery and settlement of the island, the foundation of a settlement at Gwato on the mainland together with the growth of trade between the island and the neighbouring coast, and the rise of São Thomé as a prosperous sugar plantation and an entrepôt in the transatlantic slave trade.

São Thomé was probably discovered by Ruy de Sequeira at the end of 1473. The island was situated in what is now known as the Bight of Biafra and lay on the equator¹. But it was of volcanic formation and mountainous, so that, despite very heavy rainfall and its tropical position, almost every variety of climate was to be experienced between the summit of the highest point (7,021 ft.) and the sea. Its soil, moreover, was very fertile, an abundant labour supply might be obtained in Guinea, and there was fresh water in the many streams which descended swiftly from the mountains. These conditions made settlement possible. The island was granted as a captaincy to João de Paiva in 1485, but the first attempts to populate it were not very successful. Accordingly, on 29 June 1493, the King of Portugal appointed a new captain, Alvaro de Caminha, a knight of the royal household, and under his influential leadership more rapid progress was made. A number of young Jews were at once trans-

¹ Between latitudes 0° 24' N. and 0° 1' S.

ported to the island, and the chroniclers record that this laid the foundation of its prosperity (doc. 9). At the same time, the government in Portugal encouraged the growth of the white settlement in the island by sending convicts and exiles¹.

Meanwhile, some of the settlers began to trade with the nearby coast of Guinea, their chief objects being to obtain negroes, whom they could employ on their holdings in the island, and the pungent Benin pepper which they could re-export to Europe. As explained above, the coast of the mainland from the Rio da Volta to Cape St. Catherine was explored during the years 1471-5 and the kingdom of Benin a few years afterwards. Moreover, in 1485 King John II authorised the islanders of São Thomé to trade with the mainland, and his purpose in doing this was, presumably, not only to encourage men to settle in the island, but also to promote intercourse between his subjects and the powerful King of Benin. His policy seemed at the outset to succeed, for the chronicler, Pina, records that the native king sent an ambassador to Portugal from a place called Ugato [Gwato]. The negro envoy was welcomed in Portugal, and then, when he returned to his own country, he took with him many presents—the usual bribes—and missionaries and factors accompanied him. The factors remained in Benin to direct the pepper trade, but the climate proved unhealthy and the trade not very profitable, and so this commerce was abandoned (doc. 6). Pina thus briefly sketches the story of the factory of Gwato. Barros gives a much fuller account. Because of the demand for slaves in São Jorge da Mina, he writes:

the king ordered the building of a factory in a port of Beny, called Gato [Gwato], whither there were brought for sale a great number of those slaves, who were bartered very profitably at the Mina, for the merchants of gold gave twice the value obtainable for them in the Kingdom².

But, he continues, the venture was not a success. The King of Benin showed no sincerity in his desire to become a Christian and the country was very unhealthy, and so both priests and

¹ J. J. Lopes de Lima, *Ensaios sobre a statistica das possessões portuguezes na Africa* (1844), bk. II, pt. I, p. 39; bk. II, pt. 2, pp. 4, 5.

² *Asia*, dec. I, bk. 3, ch. 3.

factors were recalled home. Nevertheless, the slave trade between Benin and Mina was pursued without interruption until the reign of King John III:

... for a considerable time afterwards, both during the life of Dom João and of Dom Manuel, this sale of slaves continued from Beny to Mina, for ordinarily the ships that left this Kingdom went to Beny to buy slaves, and then carried them to Mina, until this trade was altered on account of the great inconveniences which arose. A large caravel was wont to sail from the island of S. Thomé, where the slaves of the coast of Beny joined those from the kingdom of Congo, because all the vessels that sailed to those parts called there, and this caravel carried them from the island to Mina¹.

The slave trade, thus carried on by ships from Portugal which sailed to Benin and from there to Mina, was probably initiated and directed on a monopolistic basis by contractors. The country of Benin had been explored by 1485, and onwards from this time the trade of certain rivers there was leased to contractors at an annual rent. Thus, for example, that of the Rio dos Escravos was rented by the Florentine financier, Bartholomew Marchione, during the years 1486–8, while that of the Rio Primeiro was rented by another contractor during the year 1502 (docs. 19, 22). The purchase of slaves for these contractors was doubtless arranged by the Portuguese factor in Gwato. This town was situated near the mouth of the Rio Formosa [R. Benin], and the resident factor may even have employed subordinates, who were sent up the other rivers, east to the Rio dos Escravos and west to the Rio Primeiro, in order to buy slaves and bring them back to the factory. The factor also transacted business for the islanders of São Thomé; and the importance of this part of his work must have increased, when, as Barros states above, the organisation of the trade was changed and negroes from Benin were carried to Mina via São Thomé instead of direct. In the year 1500, indeed, when Fernão de Mello became captain of the island, extensive privileges were granted to the islanders relating to their trade with the mainland (doc. 13). We may presume that, after this, a ship was regularly sent from the island to the mainland to embark slaves at Gwato and transport

¹ *Asia*, dec. 1, bk. 3, ch. 3.

them to São Thomé, where some were absorbed in the growing sugar industry, others reshipped for Mina, and the rest earmarked for transportation to Europe. The account, rendered by Fernão de Mello in 1510, shows that by this time a trade in slaves—and also in pepper—was being pursued between the island and the mainland with the assistance of the factor in Benin (doc. 26).

One of the results of the foundation of the factory at Gwato was to encourage the spread of Portuguese influence among the negroes of the kingdom of Benin. Factors, missionaries and slavers all contributed. Pacheco tells us that in his day intercourse between his countrymen and the natives of Benin was very frequent. He was able to describe Gwato and the city of Benin, for he had visited the city himself no less than four times¹. His journeys were made probably in the double rôle of slaver and explorer. As frequent were the visitations of Portuguese missionaries, although their attempts to convert the King of Benin and his subjects were not an unqualified success. The first priests to go there were those who accompanied the native envoy on his return to Benin (c. 1486). But the king profited little from their ministrations, and so they were recalled². Others visited Benin in 1515-16, but they, too, found that the local king, in spite of his easy promises and his ready welcome, would not lay down the sword to take up the cross (docs. 29, 30, 36). Duarte Pires, one of the Portuguese at this time in Benin, described his experiences at the court of the King of Benin in a very interesting letter, which he sent to King Manuel on 20 October 1516. He said that the Portuguese in the negro country were on

¹ Pacheco writes: 'A league up this river [Formosa] on the left two tributaries enter the main stream; if you ascend the second of these for twelve leagues you find a town called Huguatoo [Gwato], of some 2,000 inhabitants; this is the harbour of the great city of Beny, which lies nine leagues in the interior with a good road [between them]. Small ships of fifty tons can go as far as Huguatoo. This city is about a league long from gate to gate; it has no wall but is surrounded by a large moat, very wide and deep, which suffices for its defence. I was there four times. Its houses are made of mud-walls covered with palm leaves. The kingdom of Beny is about eighty leagues long and forty wide; it is usually at war with its neighbours and takes many captives, whom we buy at twelve or fifteen brass bracelets each, or for copper bracelets which they prize more (*Esmeraldo*, bk. 2, ch. 7).

² *Asia*, dec. 1, bk. 3, ch. 3.

very good terms with the native king, who had honoured them with special privileges. He, and the priests with him, had reminded the king of the purpose of their mission, which appears to have been to conclude a treaty with him, but the king was waging war upon his neighbours and would not at first allow himself to be distracted from it. When the war ended, however, his son and some of his noblemen became Christians, a church was built, and some of the negroes began to learn to read (doc. 36). This letter affords the only known contemporary account of direct negotiations between the King of Benin and the Portuguese living in his country. It should, however, be regarded as an illustration of what was constantly happening rather than as a complete story in itself. Such embassies contributed to the spread of Portuguese customs and culture among the negroes. Besides the priests, moreover, there were the traders. Portuguese factors, some of them probably mulattoes, appear to have resided in Gwato from 1486 to c. 1520. The chroniclers fail to make it clear when the factory there was abandoned. But records suggest that it survived at least during the reigns of Kings John II and Manuel, for in 1512 Bastião Fernandes, described as formerly 'factor in Beny', was ordered to account for his tenure of that office and to report what he had received from his predecessor, Duarte Lopes; while Duarte Pires was probably the factor in 1516 (docs. 27, 36). So we may conclude that the factory at Gwato was abandoned towards the end of the reign of King Manuel. This event, of course, did not destroy, even if it checked, Portuguese influence in the kingdom of Benin. Barros records the visit of ambassadors from that country to Portugal in the year 1540; and when the Englishman, Captain Windham, visited Benin in 1553, he came across a striking example of its prevalence in that the king 'could speake the Portugall tongue, which he had learned of a child' (doc. 129). Long afterwards, indeed, though other European peoples came to dominate the Mina coast, signs of Portuguese influence remained everywhere apparent in Benin.

While the factor in Gwato and his colleagues tried to consolidate their position in Benin, planters in São Thomé were becoming steadily more prosperous. Fernão de Mello retained

the captaincy of the island until his death in 1522, when it reverted to the crown. During his period of office, he not only encouraged the slave trade but also introduced the sugar industry. Under the terms of the royal grant of 26 March 1500, the islanders had been authorised to send ships to the mainland 'from the Rio Real and the island of Fernam de Poo as far as all the land of Manicomguo' (doc. 13). This, in effect, permitted them to buy slaves from the negro merchants of the mainland from the modern Slave Coast to Congo. The slave trade then became very important in the economy of the island. It passed into the hands of contractors, who arranged for the transportation of negroes from the island to Mina, to Portugal, and to the West Indies (docs. 58, 71). Early in the sixteenth century, the revenue from the duties on this trade came to be large enough to make it worth the while of financiers to rent the right of collecting them (doc. 31). Important as slaves were, however, sugar came to be the main bastion of the island's prosperity. The soil was found to be very suitable for the cultivation of the sugar-cane, and cheap labour was available. Traders scoured the shores of Guinea around the Gulf in search of slaves, using the island as their base for these mainland activities. Scores of negroes were brought to the island, where they were forced to clear the forests and to cultivate and refine the sugar. So it was that by 1540 an immensely flourishing sugar industry had been organised. The planters lived on the grand scale. They built themselves huge timbered mansions, in which they dwelt like lords among their domestics, their retainers and their mulatto mistresses. If the fevers, and the turbulent Angolares who lived in the southern hills and were reputed to be descended from escaped slaves and shipwrecked negroes, sometimes troubled them (docs. 60, 61), yet on the whole at this time they lived very comfortably. They worshipped wealth, and some of them developed the unruly independence of the feudatory. It is recorded, for example, that when Francisco de Barros de Paiva, captain of São Thomé, took a party of armed men to seize the person of a very rich and influential planter, named Gaspar Fernandes, they found him 'on his estate . . . and fortified in a castle of wood, which he had built there, and attended by a company of liveried

men in the chamber where he was accustomed to sleep¹. The European population was to be found mainly in the north of the island around the port of Povoasan. The bishop, and the agents of the contractors resided here, and also the factors of some of the great commercial houses of Europe, engaged in trade with Guinea. Most of the sugar was taken direct to Antwerp for distribution in France, Flanders, Germany and England, and some idea of the scale of the island industry may be gathered from the fact that during the years 1549–56 alone more than seventy ships were insured at Antwerp to undertake voyages between Europe and São Thomé². It should perhaps be added that a little sugar was also obtained at this time from the neighbouring island of O Principe. Conditions in São Thomé during the early sixteenth century are fully described by the anonymous Portuguese pilot who at that time was employed on voyages to and fro between it and Lisbon (doc. 62). This island, indeed, as the entrepôt for the transatlantic slave trade and as one of Europe's principal sources of sugar, was for a short time amazingly prosperous.

¹ Pedro A. d'Azevedo, 'Os Escravos', in *Arquivo historico portugues*, I, 303–4.

² J. Denucé, *L'Afrique au xvi^e siècle et le commerce anversois* (1937), pp. 95–6.

DOCUMENTS

I. GRANT OF RIGHTS OF TRADE IN GUINEA TO THE SANTIAGIANS. 12 JUNE 1466¹.

Dom Affonso V [etc.]. To all to whom this letter shall come, we make known that prince dom Fernando, my most dear and beloved brother, has sent to inform us that some four years ago he began to populate his island of Santiago², which is opposite Cabo Verde, and that, because it is so remote from our kingdoms, people are unwilling to go to live there, unless they are given very wide privileges and franchises and go at his expense. He, knowing the great profit it would yield us and him, if the island were thus populated, as he wished, in which cause he was ready to go to much personal expense so as to carry it to perfection, and being hopeful of success with God's help, prayed us to be pleased to grant him some privileges for them. We, having seen his petition and having considered it carefully, believe that we may thereby be very well served. And so that we may graciously reward my said brother, we are pleased to command him to be given the following privileges, namely: first, we give and grant him civil and criminal authority over all Moors, black and white, free and captive, and over all their descendants, who are in the said island, although they be Christians, and this while our favour continues. This civil and criminal authority, which we thus grant him in the manner stated, is additional to the authority which already before this we gave him in the said island, as is contained in the patent of the said grant which he has from us.

Furthermore, we are pleased to authorise him that henceforward and always the inhabitants of the said island may have

¹ Torre do Tombo, livro das ilhas, f. 2v. Printed in Barcellos, *Subsidios*, I, 21-3. Translated.

² On 3 December 1460, King Affonso V had granted the island of Santiago to Prince Fernando. Grant printed in *Alguns documentos*, pp. 27-8.

and hold licence, whenever they wish, to be able to go with ships to trade and to buy in all our trades of the parts of Guiné (save our trade of Argum, where we do not wish anyone to trade or do anything either in the said trade or in its limits, except him to whom we are pleased to grant licence and permission) all the goods, which the said inhabitants of the said island have and desire to carry, except arms and iron tools, ships and their equipment, because our pleasure is that none of these things should be bartered in any manner in the said trades, and we have strictly forbidden this before, under the penalty for such a thing already imposed.

They may do this, without further approaching us or sending to us, or to our officers and others, to ask or apply for the said licence, or for clerks so that they may have them with them in their ships in the said parts, according to our ordinance with reference to those who go there from our kingdoms; but we will that they ask and apply for the said licences and clerks from the customs officer or receiver, whom we command to be appointed there to be our deputy in order to collect and gather our dues, which are to be the fourth of all things, which the inhabitants of the said island thus barter in the said parts of Guiné.

These, our officers, whom we thus appoint there in the said island, shall be ready and diligent to supply clerks to the said shippers, so that each shall carry one, as is required in each ship which goes there, according as is now done in the ships which go from our kingdoms¹ to the said parts of Guiné.

The said customs officer or receiver shall thus be ready to collect the said dues, which are to accrue to us from the said ships which are equipped in the said island, as soon as they return from the said parts of Guiné. If the said officers are not thus ready to collect the said dues and to provide the said clerks, in their absence he may collect and provide who has charge of the government and captaincy of the said island for my said brother, and he shall keep these dues himself until we send for them. When this happens, the said governor or captain shall advise us thereof by letter.

These clerks, thus to be supplied, shall be such as are fully

¹ Portugal and the Algarve.

competent and suitable for our service, and for their salary they shall receive everything which we have ordered and commanded is to be given to clerks who go from our kingdom to the said parts of Guiné. They shall receive this from the day when the said ships leave the said island for the said trades till they return to it, and no more.

Furthermore, it is our will and pleasure that, when the amount of our dues has been paid on all the said imported negroes and goods, the said inhabitants of the said island may sell on their own accounts what they have left to all persons, who want and desire them, not only in the said island but in all our kingdoms and abroad; and if they sell in the said island, the buyers shall not have to pay on the said goods, in these kingdoms when they are brought here, either the tenth or any other dues; and if they do not sell them in the said island but wish to bring them to our kingdoms or to carry them to other parts, they may do this, because they are exempt from having to pay us the said dues; and this, provided they carry certificates from our officers, whom we shall thus appoint in the said island, showing that they have already paid our dues upon them there.

Furthermore, it is our will and pleasure that the said inhabitants of the said island shall not be under obligation to us to carry or send our said dues, but that we are to send for them to the said island at our own charge and expense¹.

Furthermore, it is our will and pleasure, in the event hereafter of our farming out the said trades of the parts of Guiné, or a part thereof, that, should we do this, this licence, which we thus grant my said brother for the inhabitants of the said island, shall not transgress or stay such a farm, and this shall be thus enacted so that we shall not be reminded of this grant to my said brother.

Furthermore, it is our will and pleasure that henceforward the inhabitants of the said island are always to be freed and exempted from the payment to us in all our kingdoms and lordships of the tenth of all goods which they transport from the said

¹ The significance of this paragraph lies in the fact that customs dues were generally paid in kind, often in slaves.

island, not only of goods which are of their own inheritance and gathering, but also of goods which they buy, or secure by exchange, or obtain in any other way.

Likewise, they shall be exempted from the payment to us of the tenth of all goods, which they buy and secure by exchange of other articles of their own in the islands of Canaria, Madeira, Porto Santo and the Açores, and in all the other islands in the ocean sea, and which they bring to our kingdom. This shall be, provided our officers are notified that the said persons are inhabitants of the said island of S. Thiago by report of the captains of the said island.

Therefore, we command all overseers of our exchequer, accountants, treasurers, customs officers and receivers, clerks, magistrates, judges and justices, and other officers and persons whatsoever, to whom this letter shall be shown, and who are cognisant thereof, that henceforward they shall observe and keep it, and cause it to be properly observed and kept, and in the manner stated herein.

Should any desire to disobey this, we command them in no wise to permit it, forasmuch as this is our wish, notwithstanding any doubt or embargo which others may raise or impose. And for its security and our remembrance, we command them to be given this letter, signed by our hand and sealed with our pendent seal. Given in Beja. 12 June 1466. Pedro da Alcaçova made this.

2. GRANT TO FERNÃO GOMES. 1469¹.

. . . as the king [Affonso V] was very occupied with the affairs of the kingdom, and was not satisfied to cultivate this trade himself nor let it run as it was, he leased it on request in fourteen hundred and sixty-nine to Fernão Gomes, a respected citizen of Lisbon, for five years, at two hundred thousand reis a year, on condition that in each of these five years he should engage to discover one hundred leagues of coast farther on, so that at the end of the lease five hundred leagues should be discovered,

¹ *Asia*, dec. 1, bk. 2, ch. 2. Extract. Crone's translation.

beginning from Serra Leoa [Sierra Leone]. . . . And among other terms of this contract was that all the ivory should be delivered to the king at the price of one thousand five hundred reis per hundredweight, . . . and—a privilege much appreciated at that time—Fernão Gomes was allowed to buy in each of the said five years one civet-cat¹. This contract was made in the year fourteen hundred and sixty-nine, upon condition that he was not to trade on the mainland opposite the islands of Cabo Verde, because, as they belonged to prince D. Fernando, this trade was reserved for their inhabitants². Also the traffic of Arguim was excluded, because the king had given it to his son, prince D. João, as part of his revenue; however, later on, the same Fernão Gomes secured this traffic of Arguim from the prince for some years at a price of one hundred thousand reis a year. . . . And in the year fourteen hundred and seventy-four, which was the last of his lease, the king gave him a new coat of arms of nobility.

3. RENEWAL OF GRANT TO FERNÃO GOMES. 1 JUNE 1473³.

Dom Afonso [*etc.*] To all to whom this our letter shall come, we make known that we have now made the following agreement with Fernam Gomez, our knight, by which it is our pleasure that, in addition to the five years during which he has the lease of all our land of Guinee and the trades thereof, he shall have one more year besides the said five; and this in the same manner and with the same conditions and declarations and arrangements, as we have granted and issued it to him in the letter of contract, which he holds for the said five years. These are the conditions, namely, that he, the said Fernam Gomez, is to give and pay us the three hundred milreis, which he is obliged to give and pay in each year of the said five for the said lease, namely: two hundred milreis, which first at the beginning of the said lease he contracted to give us in each of

¹ Trade in civet-cats was prohibited in 1470 (*Alguns documentos*, p. 33). Civet was valued in perfumery for blending scents.

² In accordance with the provisions of the grant of 1466 (doc. 1).

³ Torre do Tombo, Chancelleria de D. Affonso V, livro 33, f. 147v. Translated. Printed for the first time. I am indebted to Prof. Edgar Prestage for drawing my attention to this document.

the said five years, and one hundred milreis, which, after this, he contracted to give us for each of the said years for the malagueta, which we command none may buy in the said contracts, except the said Fernam Gomez, according to our letter, which he has¹. It is also a condition with reference to the eight licences, which he still has, to send ships out and back in this said year, after the said five years are finished, which we granted to certain persons, so that they might send ships out before we concluded the said contract with him, and so that they might trade during the time of his lease, and with reference to other licences, which we gave to other persons so that they might send ships out at the end of the said five years, which he, the said Fernam Gomez, held, that he may send these ships out at such a time that they will return to these our kingdoms (wherever he sends them to trade) within this last year which we now grant him; and if they do not return within the said year, that the said licences shall be null and void, and he may never use them or seek profit from them². It is also a condition that during the said year we do not give, or command to be given, licence to any person to have a right of trade there, because we cede him entirely and without restriction the said contract during the said sixth year, in the form and manner that the said Fernam Gomez enjoys it during the said five years and with the aforesaid conditions. And for our remembrance and the security of all this, we command him to be given this letter, by which we command all our officers, to whom it may be shown, or to whom charge thereof may belong, to keep and observe it, and to cause it to be entirely kept and observed, according to its contents, because this is our pleasure. Given in Lixboa, on the first day of June, Joham Carreiro made this, in the year of Our Lord Jesus Christo 1473.

¹ Trade in malagueta pepper had been forbidden in 1470 (*Alguns documentos*, p. 33).

² The meaning and significance of these eight and 'other' licences is not clear. It would appear that, before Gomes concluded his contract with Affonso V in 1469, various other merchants had received licences to trade in Guinea. Gomes subsequently bought them out.

4. THE FOUNDATION OF THE CASTLE AND CITY OF SÃO JORGE DA MINA. 1482¹.

Whereas at this time the city of Sam Jorge na Mina was newly built, it should be known that, while the king² was yet a prince, he held by royal grant from the king, his father, the entire government of the places of Africa and also the revenues and trades of Myna and of all Guinee³, which at that time the king for a very small rent had farmed out to Fernā Gomes da Myna, a citizen of Lixboa. The king, considering, as a wise man, the great profit and good health, which his subjects would receive in body and soul, and also how his merchandise, and the affairs of his honour, estate, and service would be properly secured, if he were to possess in those parts of Mina a fortress of his own, and wishing to know whether such a fortress could or should be built, held a meeting of his council to discuss this matter, and contrary votes and opinions were given there. While some thought it would be an easy thing to do and very profitable, others believed it would be very dangerous and perilous, and, in fact, impossible, or, even if they allowed it to be built, its upkeep would be very difficult, both on account of the great remoteness of the land and because the climate was very sicken-ing and the negroes little truthful and less trustworthy. These objections were so considerable, they said, that it ought not to be built. The king, after these arguments had been advanced, nevertheless determined that it should be built. For this purpose, he ordered that all the timber and free-stones, which would be necessary for the gates, the windows, the corner-rafters of the walls, the tower, and other things, should forth-with be cut and shaped in this country, so that without any delay in the work they could be set in place immediately. Moreover, a great quantity of mixed and compounded lime was made ready, together with tiles and bricks, nails and iron tools, and

¹ Pina, ch. 2. The text of José Correa da Silva's edition of Pina's *Chronicle of John II*, printed in vol. II of the *Collecção de livros inéditos de historia portugueza* (1792), from which this translation was made, was based upon a copy of the chronicle in the Torre do Tombo, and collated with another very old text in the possession of the Benedictine monks of the Monastery of Lisbon.

² John II of Portugal.

³ Bensaude, pp. 273-4.

provisions, and all other things pertinent to the work in great abundance. And six hundred men also were ordered and equipped, one hundred masters of masonry and carpentry and five hundred for defence and service. And it was agreed that the whole should be carried, as it was carried, in *urcas*¹ and great ships with the idea that they might not return or sail any more², and, besides these, there went other ships and caravels, strong and sound, with many provisions, medicines, and rich wares, and very honourable men and dependants of the king were appointed captains of these ships. After certain persons, to whom this work was assigned, had already provided the king with excuses for themselves for fear of the difficulties and perils involved, the first man to accept it freely and to be willing to undertake it was Fernã Lourenço, who was the secretary of his exchequer and had charge of the treasury and factory of these trades, afterwards being officially appointed. But the king, after praising him highly and profusely thanking him for this offer, as his goodwill deserved, refused him, on account of the same charge with which he was entrusted. Then, being informed of the virtues, loyalty, great courage and good sense of Diego da Azambuja, a knight of his household, who had already been proved in other affairs of considerable importance and great peril, with words about the singular confidence, which he reposed in him, and promising him that he might expect great rewards and preferments, he entrusted him with the work; and da Azambuja, with others of very praiseworthy obedience and

¹ The *urca* (hulk) was a large provision ship of up to 500 tons.

² Resende, in ch. 25 of his *Chronica*, develops this point: 'And because in all the ocean sea there are no *navios latinos* [ships with lateen sails], except the caravels of Portugal and the Algarve, the king caused it to be believed by all that *navios redondos* [round ships, or ships with round sails] could not return from Mina on account of the currents. And for this reason, he sent all the stone, lime, tiles, timber, nails, iron-work and provisions in old *urcas*, so that they might be broken up in that country, and so that men might say that they were unable to return, owing to the currents; and so it was done in very great secrecy . . . and all men were so sure of this that, during the lifetime of the king, it was always believed that round ships were unable to return from that country, and by this means Mina was always well guarded.' The advantage of lateen sails was that they enabled a ship to tack and so proceed against the wind. This was necessary on the return from Mina, for the prevailing wind off the Mina and Malagueta coasts was south-westerly.

sure loyalty, accepted it with a smiling face and a steady heart¹. And to put this into execution, he then went to make preparations at Lixboa, from where he departed in December on the eve of the day of Santa Luzia² in the year one thousand four hundred and eighty-one, having already sent forward the *urcas*, which were to wait for him at Cabo Verde. And because he carried orders that the fortress was to be built in the land of Mina at whatever place he thought the best, from the Cabo das Tres Pontas up to the Cabo das Redes, which are forty leagues distant more or less one from the other, accordingly in this latitude he went forward a little from the rest of the fleet, and with much care and caution he examined and selected the places of all that land suitable for this purpose; and at some, where the disposition of the land was good, he found the sea very contrary on account of bad anchorage, and at others, where the sea was suitable, the land and the rocks would not allow it, either on account of shallows or for lack of water. And finally, guided by the Holy Spirit and committing himself to its care, he arrived near the village, which was called das Duas Partes [Village of the Two Parts]³, where he disembarked on Wednesday, the nineteenth of January, in the year one thousand four hundred and eighty-two, and, examining with great care the lofty situation of the land, which was very suitable for defence and for the health of the people, and having tested and sounded the anchorages of the sea for the ships, he discovered that a better disposition for a fortress could neither be found nor pictured, especially since there was much rock, and a large settlement, which offered hope to the inhabitants of fresh water and other provisions for very long periods. And on the next day, which was the day of Sam

¹ Diogo d'Azambuja (1432-1518) had distinguished himself in the service of Portugal at the siege of Alegrete, where he fought by the side of John II, at that time heir-apparent. Pina's use of the phrase 'being informed of the virtues, loyalty, great courage and good sense of [d'Azambuja]' suggests that he was quoting from an official decree, now lost, issued by John II appointing d'Azambuja to be governor of the castle which he was to build at Mina. Cf. doc. 47.

² December 12.

³ The name of the native village is suggestive. Had it anything to do with the fact that the ground, on which the castle was built, was shared between the Fetu and the Comani?

Sebastiam¹, by the advice of one, Joham Bernaldez, whom he met there bartering, he went on land, clothed in silk and brocade, and with his men in good order. And at the foot of a tree, under its shade, he commanded a mass to be said (which was the first that was said) and he attended; and henceforth that valley was, and shall always be, called the Vale of Sam Sebastiam. Then, after eating, he ordered a richly ornamented platform to be erected; and he sat thereon, accompanied by very honourable men, and with his trumpets, tambourines and drums, and all in an act of peace, in order to receive there, by agreement, the lord of the place, who was called Caramansa², whom the negroes called king, and to speak with him. Hither the king came, and before him a great noise of bugles, bells and horns, which are their instruments, and he was accompanied by an endless number of negroes, some with bows and arrows, and others with assagais and shields; and the principal persons were attended behind by naked page-boys with seats of wood, like stools, to sit upon³. The king came naked, and his arms and legs and neck were covered with chains and trinkets of gold in many shapes, and countless bells and large beads of gold were hanging from the hair of his beard and his head. The captain stepped down from his platform to receive him, amid a great sounding of his instruments; and the king gave the captain his usual signal of peace, which was to touch his fingers and then to snap the one with the other, saying in his language '*Bere, bere*', which in ours means 'Peace, peace'; and the captain returned the compliment. Then, the principal persons, who came with him, followed him, all first wetting their fingers in their mouths and then wiping them on their breasts, before touching those of the captain,

¹ January 20.

² Eustache de la Fosse (*Voyage*) refers to Caramansa: 'We drew lots as to which of us should go six leagues farther on, for there are two ports at the said mine of gold, the first being named Chama [Samma], and the other, which is six leagues beyond, the village of two parts, and this because there are two villages . . . and it fell to my lot to go six leagues forward. . . . I departed the day after I arrived at the mine of gold to go to the place assigned to me, and this was the Sunday before Christmas [1479]; and then we took surely from the manse and caramanse, who are the king and viceroy; and the Monday, on the morrow, we went to begin trade.'

³ The stools of chieftainship.

which is a courtesy and a rare grace among them that is specially kept for kings and persons of great estate. When all were again seated and a signal for silence given, the captain began his speech, with the aid of a negro, familiar with the language, who forthwith interpreted it, and its substance was: that, on account of the good report which the king, his lord, had received about them, and of the good treatment which they above all the men of that land gave to his vassals, who were accustomed to come to trade there, his highness had sent him there to treat with them and for ever to secure peace and friendship; in such a way that in that place rather than in any other of that territory there might be made, and should be, a permanent centre for much, very rich merchandise, so that by their good treatment they and their descendants might always be very rich and very ennobled. Notwithstanding that other kings and lords of that land, being willing to take this chance, had already with many gifts begged him for such a centre¹, the king, his lord, did not wish it save with them, because of the great trust and good credit, which already he specially reposed in them. And forasmuch as a house was necessary, because it was reasonable that the merchandise, which they were now bringing, and would in future arrive, might always remain there continuously, fresh and secure, he asked them to give place and licence and even assistance, so that it might be built at the mouth of the river², because from such a house and from the Christians, who would be stationed in it, they would always find and receive protection, profit and favour. The king, with his principal persons there, then replied to him, saying that the people of the Christians, who up to that time had come there, were few, foul and vile, and that the people, who had now arrived, were very different, particularly he himself, who by his clothes and appearance must be the son or the brother of the King of Portugal. At this, before they proceeded in their speech, the captain again replied to them that he was neither the son nor the brother of the king, his lord,

¹ Barros records that Bayo, King of Sama [Samma] was one of the native kings who had asked the Portuguese to build a house in his land (*Asia*, dec. I, bk. 3, ch. 1).

² R. Benja.

but one of his very humble vassals, because the king was so very powerful and so great a lord that in his kingdoms, which he commanded and which obeyed him, there were two hundred thousand men, greater and better and richer. They marvelled at this, and to signify their great admiration, as is their custom, they vigorously clapped their hands. Proceeding in their reply, they said furthermore that, judging by his appearance and by his assurance that he spoke to them in the name of the king, it could not be that he was hiding the truth from them, or that he was intending trickery or malice against them by his requests. Accordingly, they gave him permission then to build the house, as he desired; since, if, when it was built, he kept his promise, it was certain that the King of Portugal, his lord, would be better served, and that the Christians, his subjects, would at all times be treated better; but if he should do the contrary, they would leave him the houses and the land, set their own persons free, and in another land would not want for straws and sticks with which they might soon build other houses¹. Then the captain responded to them, by a sign, that they might always be sure and certain of everything which he had told them; because Christians were not accustomed to lie, but rather to do and discharge affairs better than they talked of them; and therefore they might believe that the king, his lord, and his descendants, would make that land the most honourable and the richest, and its population the chief, of any among them. Being very satisfied with this, with cheerful shouts they expressed their grateful thanks, and many made them offers of themselves; and all stood up. Then, the captain, before withdrawing, went at once with the master-craftsmen, whom he brought, to put together the base of the fortress, for which they took material from the top of some high rocks, which the negroes were accustomed to worship and to hold as very sacred. On that day, the captain

¹ This is another illustration of the semi-nomadic habits of some of the tribes of the Gold Coast, which so many writers commented upon during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Caramansa knew that the last thing the Portuguese wanted was that he and his people should move away from the district, for that would ruin the gold trade. This threat was one of his most powerful weapons. In 1523, the Mina negroes did actually begin to move away from the castle of São Jorge (doc. 49).

then divided the work by shifts and captaincies, so that on the next day, which was the twenty-first of January, they might begin it, as they did. Also in like manner, he sent to the king and his men a good present of many *lambres*¹, basins, manillas², and other cloth, which was to be given to them first before all else to ensure their goodwill, and he entrusted Joham Bernaldez with this task, who yet went with it not so early but that already the workmen and quarrymen began the work sooner; because at dawn they were busy laying the foundations of the tower and also breaking the stones and then setting them in place. The negroes, upon seeing the destruction and utter ruin of their sacred rocks, meanwhile believed that they were looking upon the loss of all hope of their salvation, and all eagerly and in a great rage took up their arms and so struck hard at the workmen, who, not being able to resist them, retreated in flight to the boats. Whereupon, Diego da Azambuja then hurriedly sent help; and because he knew that the present, which he had ordered, had not yet been delivered, he realised that the cause of the tumult proceeded from the negligence of the messenger. Accordingly, he commanded that there was to be no delay in delivering the present, to which he added some more things owing to the greater need of their favour; whereby all the evil of

¹ Variant spellings, occurring in the records, are 'alambees', 'alambeis', 'alambes', 'hambels', 'lambes', 'lambeis', 'lambees', 'lanbeis', 'lanbens', 'llambeys'. The term was of Arabic origin, and these variants represent Portuguese attempts to reproduce it phonetically. Pacheco (*Esmeraldo*, bk. 2, ch. 4) refers to the exchange of hambels at Axim: '*Lanbens*, that is, a kind of mantle, made like the shawls of Alentejo, with stripes of red, green, blue and white, the stripes being two or three inches wide . . . are made in the city of Ouram [Oran] and in Tenez . . . and also in Tunez [Tunis] and in other parts of Berbery. This is the principal merchandise used for the barter of gold in Axem.' This passage is one of the very few extant descriptions of the hambel. The Portuguese seem to have thought of the hambel as a sort of covering in which one could roll oneself up to sleep, and it could also serve as clothing. Portuguese ships went to buy these hambels at Oran, Safi and Azamour. Men were actually commissioned to manufacture hambels for the Guinea trade. In 1512, for example, the making of this type of cloth was in the hands of a Jew named Mair, or Meyer Levi. From the ports of Barbary, the hambels were brought to Lisbon, and in the warehouses of the Casa de Guiné they were rolled up. From Lisbon, they were taken to Guinea and sold to the native merchants at Arguim, Axim and São Jorge da Mina. See Ricard, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-6.

² Rings or bracelets, which formed a medium of exchange in Guinea.

the negroes was at once turned into good and their direct refusal into a double consent. As a result of this incident, no other house was marked out or founded and no foundation laid, until the tower was above one story high. When it had been built up to this level, the surround of the castle was forthwith begun, for which it was necessary to demolish some houses of the negroes, and to this they and their women consented easily and without taking offence in return for large reparations and the gifts which were given to them. Then they began to need water urgently; for they were unable to make use of the supply in the land and near there, on account of the negroes guarding it continuously and forbidding them to use it, and because they did not wish to attack them and to take it by force. After having considered many remedies, they were obliged by chance and, as it were, miraculously to provide themselves with a supply elsewhere. Though many of the people sickened and some died, the work was pressed on so fast that within twenty days the walls of the fortress were built up to their full height, and so was the tower, and within many houses were finished. Then the fort was assigned the name O Castello de Sam Jorge, as a mark of respect to him who is the patron and protector of Portugal. But afterwards, on the fifteenth day of March one thousand four hundred and eighty-six, the king, being in Santarem, made it by his letter patent a city with the privileges and preeminentures of a city. After the people as they wished had exchanged all their merchandise, and after taxes had been decreed, since there was gold in abundance, Diego da Azambuja set apart sixty men and three women to remain with him, and he despatched all the others; and they came to Portugal, bringing a long account of everything that had occurred and happened, which he commanded to be given to the king. The captain remained in the castle for two years and seven months, during which he set up a gallows and a pillory and made other ordinances and agreements with the negroes to the great honour and service of the king and to the profit of the Casa and the fortress. When these things were done, the king commanded him to come home, and, without his asking, on his arrival conferred upon him great honour, rewards and preferments; and this was the due reward of such

great merit and so great a service, whereby God was well served, honour, glory and praise were added to the king and his royal crown, and to the heirs and successors thereof, and great good and considerable profit resulted to his kingdoms and lordships and to the vassals and naturals of them for all time¹.

5. KING JOHN II BUILDS A FORT IN SIERRA LEONE².

... Item. Six leagues beyond the Rio de Case [Mellakori river] are some red cliffs, which adjoin the sea and the beautiful Serra Lyoa, and they extend for three leagues or more; ... Near those red cliffs, where they adjoin Serra Lyoa, is a river called Bintonbo³, from which shallows of sand extend a league or more into the sea and at low tide many islets of sand appear above the water. Two leagues above the mouth of the Rio de Bitonbo is a village called Tanguarim, of about 200 inhabitants; three leagues farther up the most serene King John II ordered a fortress to be built, and later for certain reasons he ordered it to be pulled down.

6. THE DISCOVERY OF THE KINGDOM OF BENIN⁴.

In this year [1486], the land of Beny beyond Myna to the Rios dos Escravos was first discovered by Joham Affom da Aveiro, who died there; whence there came to these kingdoms the first pepper from Guinee, whereof a great quantity was produced in that land; and presently samples of it were sent to Framdes [Flanders] and to other parts, and soon it fetched a great price and was held in high esteem. The king of Beny sent

¹ There is a striking resemblance between passages in this account of the foundation of the castle and passages in that given in the *Asia*, dec. 1, bk. 3, chs. 1, 2. Barros, of course, used Pina. But probably both writers drew upon sources now lost. Pina states that, after the castle had been finished, d'Azambuja sent to Portugal 'a long account of everything that had occurred and happened, which he commanded to be given to the king'. In other words, he sent John II a written report. It must have been largely from the contents of this report that Pina compiled his chapter.

² *Esmeraldo*, bk. 1, ch. 32. Extract. Kimble's translation.

³ R. Sierra Leone, really an arm of the sea.

⁴ Pina, ch. 24. Translated.

as ambassador to the king a negro, one of his captains, from a harbouring place by the sea, which is called Ugato [Gwato]¹, because he desired to learn more about these lands, the arrival of people from them in his country being regarded as an unusual novelty. This ambassador was a man of good speech and natural wisdom. Great feasts were held in his honour, and he was shown many of the good things of these kingdoms. He returned to his land in a ship of the king's, who at his departure made him a gift of rich clothes for himself and his wife: and through him he also sent a rich present to the king of such things as he understood he would greatly prize. Moreover², he sent holy and most catholic advisers with praiseworthy admonitions for the faith to administer a stern rebuke about the heresies and great idolatries and fetishes, which the negroes practise in that land. Then also there went with him new factors of the king, who were to remain in that country and to traffic for the said pepper and for other things, which pertained to the trades of the king. But owing to the fact that the land was afterwards found to be very dangerous from sickness and not so profitable as had been hoped, the trade was abandoned.

¹ Gwato was the usual port of call for Europeans trading with the merchants of Benin during the sixteenth century. Instructions for 'a voyadge to be made for Bynney [Benin]', dated May 1582, contain a reference to Gwato: 'Your pynnaces may goe up the river 9 or 10 leagues to a place called Gattoo, and then you have ten leagues to the king of Benin. . . . As touching the ryver, you must goe yn at the hether ryver, that goeth to Gattoo, and then you shall have 8 or 9 foote of water' (PRO, SP 12/153, no. 46). Pacheco states that the city of Benin was nine leagues away from Gwato in the interior, and that the river channel, by which one approached Gwato, that is, the Benin river, had a depth of two fathoms and two spans (*Esmeraldo*, bk. 2, ch. 7). The *Richard of Arundel*, sent to Benin by two London merchants, during the years 1588-9 and 1590-1, also made trade at 'a place called Goto, . . . being the neerest place that we could come to by water, to go to Benin' (Hakluyt, *Principal navigations*, vi, 458, 465).

² Resende (ch. 65) proceeds as follows: 'Also he sent him many holy advisers to convert him to the faith of Our Lord Iesu Christo, commanding him earnestly to forsake his idolatries and fetishes, which the negroes used and practised in his lands. Then further he sent with him factors and officers, who were to remain there, and to traffic for the said pepper and for other things in that land. But afterwards, on account of the great sickness, and because the trade was not very profitable, as had been hoped, the factory was destroyed and the officers came away.'

7. THE CONVERSION OF BEMOYM, PRINCE OF THE JALOFO,
AND THE ATTEMPT TO BUILD A FORT AT THE MOUTH OF
THE RIVER SENEGAL. 1488¹.

In this year one thousand four hundred and eighty-eight, while the king [John II] was in Setuvel [Setubal], he made a Christian of Bemoym, a negro prince of the kingdom of Gelof [Jalofo], which is at the entrance of the Rio de Çanaga [Senegal] in Guinee. His motives and reasons for this and the manner of doing it were briefly and truthfully as follows. During the previous year, while Gonçalo Coelho, a dependant of the king, was trafficking at the mouth of the said river, the said Bemoym, who at that time with prosperity and great power governed the said kingdom of Gelof, was informed through the interpreters of the royal perfection and the many virtues of the king, and, desiring to serve him, through the said Gonçalo Coelho he sent him a rich present of gold and one hundred slaves, all young men, with some other products of his land. With them as ambassador to the king came one of his nephews. This man, by virtue of a huge manilla of gold, which he gave the king as a letter of credence, according to his custom and being illiterate, sent to him to ask for arms and ships; to which the king refused consent with just reasons, based on the excommunications and the apostolic prohibitions, since he [Bemoym] was not a Christian. Then in this year, because the said Bemoym was treacherously driven out of his kingdom, he determined to embark on one of the caravels of the trade, which frequent the coast, and to come in person to seek aid, assistance and justice from the king, who was in Setuvel. Bemoym arrived in Lixboa, accompanied by some negroes of his own royal blood and sons of persons closely related to men of importance. When the king had been informed of their arrival, he commanded that they should come to be entertained at Palmella, where he forthwith commanded his men to make abundant provision for him and to serve him with silver and attendants and every other civility which was proper to his station. Also he commanded all to be given rich and fine clothes to wear, according as the quality and merit of their per-

¹ Pina, ch. 37. Extract, translated.

sons demanded. And when they were in a condition to come to the court, the king sent horses and mules, very well apparellled, to them all; and on the day when they were to make their entrance, the king commanded that Bemoym should be received by Dom Francisco Coutinho, the count of Marialva, and with him all the lords and noblemen of the court, whom the king purposely ordered to be robed and adorned as well as possible. The king was lodged in the house of the exchequer of the said town, and the queen in other houses next to him, and both residences were all furnished and decorated with very expensive cloths of silk and serge and provided with a royal dais with a canopy of brocade. With the king was the duke Dom Manuel, accompanied by many titled lords and bishops and many other nobles, robed with much gentility and exact perfection. With the queen was the prince, her son, because it was ordained that one should forthwith visit the queen immediately after seeing and speaking with the king. The king and the duke adorned their persons with the very rich robes of their authority, all trimmed with gold and many precious stones. Bemoym appeared to be forty years old, and he was a man of great stature, very dark, with a very long beard, limbs all well proportioned and a very gracious presence; and being dressed, he entered the king's rooms, and the king came forward two or three paces from the dais to receive him, raising his cap a little. Then he led him to the dais, on which there was a throne; but the king did not sit thereon, and, leaning against it, thus on foot gave ear to him. Then the said Bemoym and all his men threw themselves at his feet to kiss them, and they made a show of taking the earth from under them and, in token of their subjection and his overlordship and of their great respect, threw it over their heads. But the king with much honour and courtesy made him rise, and through the negro interpreters, who were already present for this purpose, commanded him to speak. Thereupon, Bemoym with great ease, majesty and considerable gravity made a public speech, which lasted for a long time, and he used such notable words and sentences in support of his case that they did not seem to come from a savage negro but from Prince Grego, educated in Athenas. The substance of his speech was

to recount to the king with swift sighs and many tears the tale of his miserable ill-fortune, caused by the treason which had been directed against him in his kingdom, and he declared this at large. Furthermore, he said that he was only reminding the king of this, because he was confident in the hope of revenge, aid and assistance and above all justice; for he alone in the world could and ought to give it to him, since not only was he so noble, powerful, just and pious a king, but also principally he was the lord of Guinee, to whom he, as his vassal, came, seeking assistance, justice and mercy; also he said that in the event of his royal escutcheon being richly decorated to his glory and praise with evidence of his victories over kings, it would also now be embellished with memorials of the kings whom he had made; the former would be primarily the accidental benefit of good fortune, whereas the latter would be the result of his own goodness and the greatness of his heart. Moreover, he said to him: 'Most powerful lord, God knows how, when I heard of thy greatness and thy royal virtues, my spirits were always eager and my eyes desirous to see thee; and I do not know why it was, because the more it pleased me, when I was free and in all my prosperity, the less do my overthrow and exile, by their sad condition, justify my faith and my words; but, if it were thus ordained from above that I should not come and do it so well in other circumstances more favourable to me, since it was ordained for me to see thee, I praise God fervently for my ruin; and this gladness already so satisfies me that I shall not return from this journey discontented.' Proceeding further in a word, he said that, if perhaps in reply to his petition to him for justice and help men should deny that he was a Christian, even as upon other occasions word had been sent to him by way of an excuse for refusing another similar request, there should now be no doubt or contradiction about it, because he and all his men who were present, among whom there were not wanting men of noble and royal birth, advised at other times by His holy warnings, had come in order that in his kingdoms and at his hands they might at once become Christians. He said that the only sorrow and truly grave anxiety, which they had thereby experienced, arose out of the fact that it seemed that the force

of his necessity rather than of his faith had caused him to do it. With these he coupled many other sound reasons touching his purpose. Then the king replied to him in a few words, and devoted great care and much wisdom to everything, expressing great pleasure at their meeting and even more pleasure at his final intention to be a Christian. Therefore he gave him hope in this world of assistance in his cause and of restoration to his kingdom, and in the other that of glory and eternal salvation. Thereupon, he dismissed him, and Bemoym went to speak to the queen and to the prince, before whom he made a short speech, in which with shrewd judgment and very natural dignity he asked them for favour and assistance with the king. The queen and the prince dismissed him, shewing him much honour and kindness. Then, on another day, Bemoym came to speak with the king, and, alone and apart, with an interpreter, they both conversed for a long time. Here Bemoym again recounted his affairs with great prudence; and he also replied very wisely and exactly to the questions which the king asked him, and the king remained very satisfied with this. In his honour the king ordered bull-fights and tournaments, and he held fancy-dress balls and dances, and in order that he might see them he gave orders for a chair to be placed at the upper end of the state room opposite the king. Moreover, it was the king's wish that Bemoym, before becoming a Christian, should first be instructed in matters of the faith; for Bemoym was of the sect of Mafamede in whom he believed, because of his being a neighbour of, and dealer with, the Azanegues, and he had some knowledge of the contents of the Bible. For this reason, theologians and learned men conversed with him and taught and advised him. Then it was decided that he should see and listen to a mass for the king, and this mass was said in pontifical and with great formality and ceremonial in the church of Santa Maria de Todolos Santos. Bemoym with his men and with learned Christians was in the choir, and, at the elevation of the body of Our Lord, when he saw all on their knees with their hands raised in the act of prayer, his hand went up to the cap which he had on his head; and thus, like everybody, with his knees on the ground and his head uncovered, he prayed. Then

he said with many indications of truth that the remorse, which he experienced in his heart in that hour, he took as clear proof that this was the only true God of salvation. Then for two days the king proceeded to banquet publicly, for which purpose he put on his robes and he commanded that the house and the table were to be furnished with plate and tapestries, dishes and service, and there were to be minstrels and dances, all in great perfection; for the king was deliberately very particular and exact about ceremonial above all in matters touching his estate. At the second hour of the night of the third day of the month of November, the said Bemoym, and six of the principal persons who had come with him, became Christians in the chamber of the queen, which was decorated for the occasion with elaborate formality. His godfathers were the king, the queen, the prince, the duke, a commissary of the pope who was at the court, and the bishop of Tanger who at that time was the licentiate Calçadilha. Dom Justo, bishop of Cepta, who in pontifical performed the office, baptised them, and Bemoym received the name Dom Joham for love of the king. Moreover, on the seventh day of November, the king dubbed him a knight; and twenty-four others of his men were made Christians in the counting-house of the said town. The king gave him a coat-of-arms consisting of a golden cross on a red field surrounded by the escutcheon of the arms of Portugal. On this same day, in a solemn act and speaking as a great lord he rendered obedience and paid homage to the king. Also he sent another submission, written in Latin, to the pope, wherein he gave an account of his case and of his conversion to the faith in words of deep devotion and high praise to the king. The king determined to give him help and assistance, and gave him twenty armed caravels. The captain of the caravels was Pero Vaaz da Cunha, who carried orders to build at the entrance of the Rio de Çanaga [Senegal] a fortress, which was not to be given to the said Bemoym, but was always to belong to the king. For this purpose a great quantity of stones and planed timber was then prepared, and also priests were assembled and a great number of articles for churches and for the business of conversion; and Master Alvaro, preacher to the king, of the order of Sam

Domingos, was selected to be the principal person. One of the very chief reasons which inspired the king to prepare this fleet, and especially to undertake the building of a fortress at the entrance of this river, was his conviction that the said river, penetrating far into the interior, flowed to the city of Tambucutu [Timbuktu] and by Mombare, where are the richest trades and markets of gold in the world, from which all Berberia from east and west up to Jherusalem is supplied and provided. For he believed that the said fortress in order to free and safeguard the trade would provide great security in such a place for his men and the merchandise. This region up to the river and a little beyond was discovered in the time and by the command of the Ifante Dom Anrique, the inventor and discoverer of this enterprise and the conquest of Guinee; and in his letters and records it appears that he called this river the Nillo, not that which enters the Mar do Levante at Alexandria, but another branch of it which the cosmographers say runs out to this ocean sea. But the real truth of this up to now—which is the time of our lord King Dom Manuel the First—has yet to be learned. Nevertheless, all these works, expenses and plans of Bemoym were changed to deeds of evil; because¹, after the said Pero Vaaz had put to land and entered into the said river, by readily believing suspicions of disloyalty and treason against Bemoym, or more truthfully because he wanted to return to the kingdom, he slew the said Bemoym with a sword, and then returned to this kingdom; whereat the king, being in Tavilla, grew very sad; and he overlooked this crime by Pero Vaaz, seeing that he did not visit heavy punishment upon him or upon many others who de-

¹ Resende (ch. 78) proceeds as follows: 'Because after the said Pero Vaz with his entire fleet and with the said Bemohi reached and entered into the said river, where the said fortress had to be built, he began to suspect treason against the said Bemohi; and many said that these suspicions were untrue, on account of the great goodness and deep wisdom of Bemohi and also because he had left the king with such good reason for being well satisfied and with the hope by his aid of a speedy restoration to his kingdom; instead they alleged that, owing to Pero Vaz's great desire to return to the kingdom, and owing to his fear of dying there, since there was great danger of sickness in that land, without any reason he slew the said Bemohi with the stab of a dagger in his ship, and, as soon as he had killed him, without any delay and without building any fortress, he returned at once with his entire fleet to these kingdoms.'

served it for the same reason; yet the king strongly disapproved of their killing him, since, being accomplices in such an error, they ought to have been treated as they treated him, because they had had him freely in their power without offence or peril.

8. WAR BETWEEN TWO MINA TRIBES. 1490¹.

. . . In this year one thousand four hundred and ninety, two negroes, who were enemies and lived in the district of the city of Sam Jorge na Mina, determined upon battle. One of them attacked the other, pretending that he was favoured with the help, which he said he assuredly had, from the Christians who were in the city; because he knew that the Christians were more feared among them than any others, especially in deeds of arms. The manner of it was that he ordered many of his men, who were negroes, to whiten their faces, legs and arms with clay, and commanded them to go in front, masquerading them in all other ways so that they might even more readily be taken for Christians. The other king, at the moment when the fight was about to begin, believing that the Christians were coming to the assistance of his enemy, did not await the rout, and was defeated without a struggle; and he fled, amid the great destruction of his men, and to the accompaniment of a great victory and much merriment which this gave to his opponent.

9. JEWS TRANSPORTED TO THE ISLAND OF SÃO THOMÉ. 1493².

In this year one thousand four hundred and ninety-three, the king, being in Torres Vedras, gave Alvaro de Caminha³ the captaincy of the island of Sam Tome by right and succession. Moreover, because he commanded that all who were minors, youths and girls, were to be taken captive from among those

¹ Pina, ch. 40. Extract, translated.

² Pina, ch. 68. Translated.

³ Captain Alvaro de Caminha appears to have held the island from 1493 to 1499, when Fernão de Mello replaced him. He was appointed captain by royal decree on 29 June 1493. On 20 November 1493, he was made governor of 'the fortress to be built on the island'. See *Ensaios*, bk. II, pt. 2, p. 4.

Castilian Jews in his kingdoms who did not betake themselves away within the appointed time according to the conditions of their entrance, after commanding all of them to turn Christians, he sent them to the said island with the said Alvoro de Caminha, insomuch that, being separated, they would reasonably be better Christians; and it was as a result of this that the island came to be more densely populated, and on account of this it began to thrive exceedingly.

10. ACCOUNTS OF AFFONSO ANNES DO CAMPO, CUSTOMS OFFICER OF CABO VERDE. 19 FEBRUARY 1496¹.

We make it known that by the enclosure of the account, which has now been seen in our exchequer, of Affonso Annes do Campo, squire of our household and customs officer of our island of Cabo Verde, for the three years 1491, 1492 and 1493, who received in the said island the fourths from the caravels which the inhabitants of the said island equip for Guiné by virtue of his privilege, he is shown to have received these things named below, namely: 1,914,050 reis which accrued in gold and the evaluation and sale of slaves which were of the said fourths, and 174 head of slaves, and 32 quintals², 3 arrobes³, 22 arrates⁴ of ivory, and 142 alqueires⁵ of rice and millet, and 20 cloths and a half of cotton, and 874 quintals and a half arrobe of biscuit, which were sent to him from Portugal, and 1472 quintals, 3 arrobes, 20 arrates of cotton, which he had bought for our tapestries, and 16 horses, and one pipe of malagueta [pepper], and 100 manillas of brass, and 2 mortars of *acofree*⁶, and 21 pipes, 12 almudes⁷ of wine, and 21 genet saddles equipped with girths, bits, spurs, stirrups and straps, and 14 ivory spoons, and 3 gatherings of civet, and these articles for stocking and equipping ships, namely: 49 bombards and *lagartixas*⁸, 2 barrels of

¹ 'Cartas de quitação,' no. 4. Translated.

² The quintal equalled 1 cwt., and was actually about 100 lbs.

³ 1 arrobe was about equal to 32 lbs.

⁴ 1 arrate was about 16 ozs.

⁵ 1 alqueire was equivalent to about 3 gallons.

⁶ Hardened steel? ⁷ 26 almudes equalled 1 pipe.

⁸ While the bombard (*Port. bombarda*) was a large gun, the *lagartixa* was a small cannon.

powder, 2 steel bows, 61 *babeiras*¹, 398 cannon-balls of lead, 7 picks, a half quintal of lead, and also other trifles in various quantities, namely: axes, hammers, sledges, hoes, mattocks, weeding-hooks, iron bars, pick-axes, scythes, iron files, ships' shrouds, rods, sails, anchors, *fogareos*², grapnels, iron chains, cables, oars for caravels and *barcas*³, rigging, one old *barca*, 2 old ships' hulls, and 29 empty pipes for water. Because he spent everything which he thus received on our behalf and gave us a good account thereof, . . . for this . . . we acquit and free him from obligation. Given in Montemor o Novo, on 19 February 1496. Vicente Carneiro made this.

II. ACCOUNTS OF AFFONSO DE MOURA, CAPTAIN OF ARGUIM CASTLE. 31 MAY 1497⁴.

We make known that Simão Nunes, squire of our household and clerk of our customs of Lixboa, has now come to our exchequer to explain the account, which he and Joham de Raboreda in the customs of the said city took from Affonso de Moura, knight of our household, of everything which he received and spent from 11 July 1492 to 10 August 1495, during which period he was factor and chief governor and captain of our castle of Arguim in the parts of Guiné. And it is shown by the receipt of the said account, which has been examined in our exchequer, that the said Affonso de Moura has rendered a very good account by delivering up all goods, silver, gold, slaves, cloth and other things, which he has received for the said trade and the barter thereof; and likewise of those goods which he received for the service and provision of the said castle, so that nothing remains owing to us. Wherefore, we acquit and free him from obligation. . . . Given in Evora, on the last day of the month of May in the year 1497. Joham de Bairros made this.

¹ The *babeira* was the Portuguese name for the part of the helmet which covered the chin.

² The *fogareo* was a kind of torch. It was a piece of iron, shaped like a shell, which was fixed on the top of a stake, and the Portuguese used to light pine-apples in it in the night-time.

³ The *barca* was a boat of about 25 tons, carrying one large mast.

⁴ "Cartas de quitação," no. 22. Translated.

12. ACCOUNTS OF JOHAM DE AVELLAR. 18 FEBRUARY 1498¹.

We now command an account to be taken from Joham de Avellar, knight of our household, of everything which he received of the eightths of certain caravels of Frollemtis [Florentines]², which were equipped for the rivers of Guiné, being the trade of the Casa de Guiné in Lagos; and also of the cloths of Londres [London] which he received from Duarte Brandã, through the contract of Mallagueta³, which he had made with my lord the king (may God keep him); and also of what he received and spent on the tapestries of Nuno Alvarez Correa, who was lost in the Foz de Silves⁴, and from Diego de Azambuja, who went to build the castle of the city of Sam Jorge da Mina; and also an account of other goods with which he was entrusted by the late king in this city of Lixboa. . . . Given in Lixboa, on 18 February 1498. Fernam de Espanha made this.

13. GRANT OF RIGHTS OF TRADE TO THE ISLANDERS OF SÃO THOMÉ. 26 MARCH 1500⁵.

Dom Manuel [*etc.*]. To all to whom this letter shall come, we make known that we have made a grant to Fernam de Mello⁶, a nobleman of our household, of the captaincy of the island of Samtome in the parts of Guinee for him and his successors, as is contained in the said letter; and he now tells us that, since the said island is so remote from these our kingdoms, people are unwilling to go there to live, unless they have very great privileges and franchises; and we, observing the expenditure we

¹ 'Cartas de quitação,' no. 347. Translated.

² The famous Florentine merchant, Bartholomew Marchione, probably had a share in the cargoes brought back on these ships, for, as shown elsewhere, he was one of the contractors in the Guinea trade.

³ Duarte Brandão was probably selling malagueta pepper in London, through Antwerp, and buying London cloth in return for barter on the Malagueta coast.

⁴ Silves, on the Algarve coast.

⁵ Torre do Tombo, livro das ilhas, f. 81. Translated. Printed for the first time.

⁶ Fernão de Mello was appointed to the captaincy on 11 December 1499, and it remained in the hands of his family until 1522. See *Ensaios*, bk. II, pt. 2, pp. 6-8.

have ordered for the peopling of the said island and likewise the great profits which would come from it to our kingdoms, if the island were peopled in perfection, as we hope with the help of Our Lord it will be, have resolved to grant him certain privileges and franchises, whereby the people and persons, who go there, may do this more willingly; and the privileges are as follows:

Item. Our will and pleasure is that the said inhabitants of the said island hereafter and always may have and hold licence, whenever they wish, to be able to go with ships to barter and to trade in all goods and articles, grown and produced in the said island, to the mainland—from that Rio Real and the island of Fernam de Poo as far as all the land of Manicomguo, except that they cannot barter in the land where the gold is without our special command, and they may not barter in the said land any goods or articles, forbidden by the holy father or by us under the penalties already imposed by us. We will that they may thus trade in this land in the manner stated, without further approaching us or sending to us or our officers and others to ask or apply for licence for this purpose, or for clerks, so that they may have them with them to go to the said parts in their ships, according to our ordinance with reference to those who go there from our kingdoms; but we will that they ask and apply for the said licences and clerks from the customs officer or receiver, whom we command to be appointed there to be our deputy in order to collect and gather our dues, which are to be the fourth of all articles, which the inhabitants of the said island barter there in the said parts. And these, our officers, whom thus we appoint there in the said island, shall be ready and diligent to supply the said clerks to the said shippers, with the regulation that each shall carry one in the manner required in each ship which thus goes there, as is done in the ships which by our contracts go there to the said parts of Guinee. Thus, the said customs officer or receiver shall be ready to collect the said dues, which are to accrue to us, from the said ships which are equipped in the said island, as soon as they return from the said parts of Guinee. If the said officers are not thus ready to collect the said dues and to supply the said clerks, the said Fernam de Mello, the captain, shall in their absence supply and collect, and he shall keep these

dues himself. When such happens, he shall advise us of it, so that we may send for them. These clerks, thus to be supplied, shall be fully competent and suitable for our service, and for their salaries they shall have double that which a mariner has; and you shall give them this from the day when the said ships leave the said island for the said trades up to the day when they return, and no more.

Furthermore, it is our will and pleasure, when the amount of our dues has been paid on all the said imported negroes and goods, that the said inhabitants of the said island may sell on their own accounts what remains to them to all persons, who want and desire them, not only there in the said island to others whatsoever but also in all our kingdoms and abroad; and if they sell in the said island, the buyers shall not have to pay on the said goods, in these kingdoms when they are brought here, either the tenth or any other dues; and if they do not sell them in the said island but wish to bring them to our kingdoms or to carry them to other parts, they may do this, because they are exempt from having to pay us the said dues.

They may do this, provided they carry a certificate from our officers, whom we shall thus appoint in the said island, showing that they have already paid our dues upon them there.

Furthermore, it is our will and pleasure that the inhabitants of the said island shall not be under obligation to us to carry or send our said dues, but that we are to send for them to the said island at our own charge and expense.

Furthermore, it is our will and pleasure, in the event of our farming out the said trades or a part thereof, that, should we do so, this licence, which we thus grant to the said inhabitants of the said island, shall not transgress or stay such a farm, and this is thus enacted so that we shall not be reminded of this.

Furthermore, it is our will and pleasure that hereafter and always the inhabitants of the said island shall be exempt and freed from the payment to us in all our kingdoms and lordships of the tenth of all goods, which they transport from the said island, not only of goods which are of their own inheritance and gathering, but also of goods which they buy in exchange for other things or in any manner whatsoever. Likewise, they shall

be exempted from the payment to us of the tenth of all goods and articles, which they buy or sell or obtain in exchange for other things of their own in the islands of Cabo Verde, Samt-ago, Canareas, Madeira, Porto Santo, and Açores, and all other islands of the ocean sea, and which they bring to our kingdoms.

This shall be, provided our officers are certified by letters from the said captain that the said persons are inhabitants of the said island.

Furthermore, it is our will and pleasure that the inhabitants and settlers of the said island may come to sell to the inhabitants of our city of Sam Jorge all provisions, fruits and vegetables, which they have in the said island, and they shall have gold in exchange. And this, provided all sales are effected through our officers, according to the regulation governing the manner in which are sold the provisions, which the mariners, who go from our kingdoms to the said city, carry in our caravels and ships. Therefore, we command our overseers of our exchequer, officers of the Casa de Guynee, and all accountants, treasurers, customs officers, receivers, magistrates, judges and justices, and all our officers and others whatsoever, to whom this our letter shall be shown and who are cognisant thereof, that hereafter they shall fulfil and keep this our letter and cause it to be fulfilled and kept entirely as is contained therein; and should anyone wish to disobey it, that they shall in no manner permit it, because this is our wish. And for its security and our remembrance, we command them to be given this our letter, signed by us and sealed with our pendent seal. Given in our city of Lixboa, on the twenty-sixth day of the month of March in the year of the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ one thousand five hundred. Lopo Fernamdez made this.

14. GOLD FROM MINA. 1502¹.

[Vasco da Gama], departing from Restelo², set his course via Cabo Verde, and on the last day of February he anchored before the cape at a place called by our men Porto Dale [Portudal],

¹ *Asia*, dec. 1, bk. 6, ch. 2. Extract, translated. Vasco da Gama had set out from Lisbon on this, his second voyage to India, on 10 February 1502.

² Restello, on the Tagus outside Lisbon.

where he remained six days, taking in water and a supply of fish. While he was there, a caravel put into the port, which had come from Mina, the captain being Fernando da Montarroi, who was carrying two hundred and fifty marks¹ of gold, all in manillas and jewels, which the negroes are accustomed to wear. The admiral, being accompanied by Gaspar of India² whom he had taken from Anchediva [Anjediva islands], and also by the ambassadors of the king of Cananor and the king of Cochim, wished them to be shown this gold, not so much because of its quantity, but rather so that they might see how it was sent to be worked, and that they might know that King D. Manuel was lord of the mine of gold and that normally twelve or fifteen ships arrived each year to bring him a similar quantity.

15. ACCOUNTS OF JOÃO RODRIGUES MASCARENHAS, CONTRACTOR IN THE TRADE OF GAMBIA AND CANTOR. 8 MARCH 1503³.

We command an account to be taken from Joham Rodriguez Mazcarenhas, our squire, of the contract of Cantor, which he held, and of other money which we command to be rendered; by which account he is shown to have received 3,259,331 reis and one third, namely: 2,266,566 reis, which he had contracted to give us for the rent of the Rio de Gambea and trade of Cantor, which he held from us during the past two years, beginning on the day of Sam Joham Baptista⁴ 1502, and this sum is two-thirds of the 3,400,000 reis for which the said trade was auctioned to him for three years jointly, because our will and pleasure is to collect the dues for the last year of his said lease ourselves, though we made him a grant thereof, since he alleges to us that he was losing in the said trade; and 992,665 reis, which we commanded him to register and disburse during the said year 1502 for the excise of the wines of the said city of Lixboa. . . . and he rendered in everything a good account. . . .

¹ 1 mark (Port. *marco*) was 8 ozs.

² Gaspar of India was a Jew, whom Vasco da Gama had taken on board at the Anjediva islands, when returning from his first voyage to India.

³ 'Cartas de quitação,' no. 414. Extract, translated.

⁴ Day of St. John the Baptist (24 June), which was the end of the financial half-year in Portugal.

Wherefore we acquit and free him from obligation. . . . Given in Lixboa, on 8 March 1503. Joham de Bairros made this.

16. DIOGO D'ALVARENGA TO KING MANUEL. SÃO JORGE DA MINA. 18 AUGUST 1503¹.

Sir. I, Dyego d'Alvarenga, kiss the royal hands of your highness, and I report that I have received in old linen from the first day of the month of November in the past year fifteen hundred and two up to the first fifteen days of this month of August 1503, which is a period of nine months and one half, 5,300 dobras, namely: 5000 from the merchandise and 300 in addition. More was not received, because I certify your highness that the linen for such is so rotten that it will be useless. And now, sir, I shall deliver the charge of this house up to Payo Rodriguez, as your highness commands; and I myself will go to Axem, where I trust in Our Lord, if He be pleased to grant me health, that I may serve your highness according to my desire. I should count it as a favour from your highness, if you would remember to write to the captain to the effect that he complete this house of Axem in the way your highness has commanded²; because, as things are, your merchandise is running a great risk, and so also are the people, who besides being very sick without any shelter are only holding on by the goodwill of the negroes; so that for many reasons it will be greatly in your interest to have it completed, because it is a holding which gives a very good return, and your highness ought not to neglect it but to order lime and bricks and tiles and timber, of which there are none here, so that it may be finished.

Item. Sir. Your highness will be pleased to know that on July 22 the Xeryfe, who is now king of Acomane³, came hither with all his people to a point about three bombard shots from this fortress in order to clear the roads to the fortress there and to permit the merchants to come; and the captain sent me there

¹ Torre do Tombo, *Corpo chronologico*, pt. 1, maço 4, no. 32. Translated. This document has been printed in *Alguns documentos*, pp. 133-4.

² This passage may be regarded as evidence that Axim fort was first built in 1503.

³ Perhaps 'a Comane [gente]', that is, 'the Comani people,' who inhabited the kingdom of Commenda.

with a guard of eight cross-bowmen to confirm the friendship with them, and—Our Lord be praised—they are very good and very friendly with the fortress; may it please Our Lord that it will always be so, and that his wish will go forward, as he says, that he hopes to become a Christian.

Item. Sir. Your highness will be pleased to know that Sasaxy, king of Afuto¹, was made a Christian through the great cleverness of the captain, who above all others desires to serve you and is very careful in your interest, and found a way to make him a Christian; and on the eve of Santyago, which was July 25, he sent the vicar and myself there, where it pleased Our Lord that, as soon as we reached Afuto and we were where he was, with our cross raised on high and all in procession, and when our mission, which the captain had sent him, had been completed, he received the water of baptism and was converted to the faith of Our Lord, and then with him six knights, being the principal men of the place.

Item. Sir. On the day of Santyago in the morning, he ordered to be hastily built in the market-place a house of prayer, in which mass might be celebrated; and as soon as it was finished, the vicar put on his vestments, and Our Lord was pleased to look upon them there, and all the principal persons of the place became Christians, including two wives of the king and one son, whom the captain now has in this fortress, and these principal persons would be some three hundred in number; and as soon as these were made Christians, all the other people, who were assembled there, received with much devotion the water of baptism, and I certify your highness that it was a wondrous thing to see fathers take their children on their necks and in their arms, racing to be first baptised; and there must have been assembled about a thousand persons or upwards. As soon as we had made them Christians, the vicar and I suitably arranged their chapel for them with its altar and cross, which is held in such deep reverence that it cannot otherwise be described. Thus, sir, I believe that the king of Aupya² will soon become a Chris-

¹ Perhaps ‘a Futo [gente]’, that is, ‘the Futo people,’ who inhabited the Fetu kingdom.

² Yabi?

tian, as he says; and also the king of Acomane, as I have said. May it please Our Lord that this evangelisation will be for His service and the salvation of souls and the repose of your highness. I give this account of everything, because I believe that it will please your highness and that it will be in your interest; and since everything has come to pass through me and your vicar, I assure your highness that he is a very good man and deserving of reward. And the king is called Dom Joam and the son Dom Manoell, for this was their wish.

Item. It seems to me that it would be for the glory of God and the service of your highness that a high mass ought to be celebrated once every fifteen days in that chapel of Santyago of Afuto, so as to increase their devotion and make them better Christians. If you consider it in your interest, your highness should write to the captain that he must look after the chapel, and send one more priest so that there will be no excuse, because there will be two available out of three; this is for the great glory of God and the service of your highness and the repose of the vicar, who will be rewarded thereby. May your lordship not forget to provide Axem with a priest, because men die there without confession. May Almighty God be pleased ever to prolong your royal estate with long life. Done in this your city of Sam Jorge da Mjna, on 18 August 1503.

To our lord, the king. From Mjna¹.

Diogo d'Alvarenga

17. ACCOUNTS OF PAIO RODRIGUES, FACTOR IN OLD LINEN IN SÃO JORGE DA MINA. 7 MAY 1507².

We command an account to be taken from Paio Rodriguez, knight of our household, of all that he received, while he had charge of our factory of old linen in our city of São Jorge da Mina from 28 August 1503 to 26 July 1505; and he is shown by it to

¹ This letter from d'Alvarenga is of peculiar interest, since it is the earliest, known to have been written by a European from the Gold Coast, of all the letters which have survived relating to the history of the Portuguese in Guinea. There may, of course, be others hidden in the archives, and perhaps even some of the correspondence of Diogo d'Azambuja will one day be rediscovered.

² 'Cartas de quitação,' no. 501. Translated.

have received in all 293 marks, 2 ounces, 3 drams¹, 37 grains of gold from the said mine; 924 *lambees* of different kinds, used, old and torn; and 1600 *aljaravias*², great and small and also used; also other linens for beds and tables, and clothes, and old articles which could not be employed in our great factory of the said city where he received them. He spent and delivered up this gold, these *lambes*, *aljaravias* and aforesaid things, so that he had nothing left; and he is shown to have rendered a good account of all. . . . Wherefore we acquit and free him from obligation. . . . Given in Puntete, on 7 May 1507. Joham de Bairros made this.

18. ACCOUNTS OF AYRES BOTELHO, FACTOR AT AXIM. 16 FEBRUARY 1508³.

We now command an account to be taken from Ayres Botelho, knight of our household, of everything which he received and spent in the seventeen months, during which he was our factor in the barter of Axem, which is in the parts of Guiné, a period which began on 1 May 1505 and ended on 30 September 1506; and he is shown by it to have received in gold 727 marks, 2 ounces, 3 drams, 15 grains, namely: 38 marks, 4 ounces, 2 drams from Diogo d'Alvarenga, who was factor there before him⁴; and 688 marks, 6 ounces, 1 dram, 15 grains for the sale of goods which were delivered to him for the said barter; and also he received in addition 67,095 common manillas of brass, 408 shaving bowls, 714 chamber pots, 501 *lambes de mazona* [hambels of Messina], 10 *painas*⁵, 6 urinal pots, 69 iron kettles, 164 *aljaravias*

¹ 1 dram (Port. *oitava*) being, of course, an eighth of an ounce.

² Variant spellings are '*aljaravias*', '*aljarrias*', '*aljerevia*', '*aljerevyia*'. The *aljerevia* appears to have been a sort of dressing gown with half sleeves and a hood attached, in other words, a particular type of burnous. These cloaks were made in Morocco. One finds references, for example, to their being manufactured in Tenes (*aljaravias de tenex*) (docs. 18, 23). They were bought by Portuguese merchants and carried to Mina, where there was evidently a considerable demand for them. Sometimes, moreover, the captain of São Jorge da Mina would make a present of one or more of them to a native chief (doc. 45).

³ 'Cartas de quitação,' no. 28. Translated.

⁴ This passage shows that Diogo d'Alvarenga did leave São Jorge da Mina in 1503 in order to take up his duties as factor at Axim, and, incidentally, confirms that doc. 16 is authentic.

⁵ Lengths of cloth made of very fine cotton.

de anhara (?) and 78 *de tenez* [*aljerevias* of Tenes], 93 small blankets of Flandres and 10 of Portugal, 32 *alquices*¹ of coarse weave, 102 dyed caps, 813 rods of French linen, and 181 shells; and in addition woollen cloth and cotton cloth, slaves, corals, beads of many sorts, *coris*² from the rivers, and other articles which are used in the chapel of the said factory³, and provisions for the upkeep of the said house; and also many other things of diverse descriptions and kinds, as are written and declared in detail in the receipt of his said account, which was examined and completed in our exchequer. Wherefore we acquit and free the said Ayres Botelho from obligation. . . . Given in Almeirim, on 16 February 1508. Joham de Bairros made this⁴.

19. ACCOUNTS OF FERNÃO DE LORONHA. 15 JUNE 1509⁵.

We command an account to be taken from Fernam de Lorona, knight of our household, concerning the 4,179,360 reis, which he received for certain of our revenues, namely: 1,600,000 reis from the rent of the Rio dos Escravos for the year 1502 and that of 1503; and 780,000 reis from the rent of the Rio Primeiro, which is below Mina, for the said two years . . . and 858[000?] for the rents of the pepper of Guiné for the year 1502, during which he had to assist the customs officer of the royal warehouse and he did not assist him; and 51,360 reis, which came from 26 moios⁶, 18 arrates of pepper, which he received in the castle of Sam Jorge da Mina. . . . Given in Evora, on 15 June 1509. Alvaro da Maia made this.

¹ Variant spellings are ‘alquice’, ‘alquice’, ‘allquice’. Kimble (edition of the *Esmraldo*, p. 60, note 4) states that the *alquice* was a kind of white Moorish mantle or burnous. There were various types of *alquice*, such as *alquice abane*, *alquice taxcumte*, *alquice ayqua*, and *alquice cardão*, the particular name given depending apparently upon the type of cloth used to make the mantle.

² Shells, for which there was a demand on the Mina and Benin coasts. Pacheco (*Esmraldo*, bk. 2, ch. 8) states that these *coris* were blue shells with red stripes.

³ The first reference to a chapel in Axim. It was probably built in 1503, when the factory was built.

⁴ This list of saleable goods for the Mina coast may be compared with that given in Hakluyt, *Principal navigations*, vi, 252, and that in Barbot, *Description*, bk. 3, ch. 21.

⁵ ‘Cartas de quitação,’ no. 220. Extract, translated.

⁶ A measure for corn, salt, etc., equivalent to 60 alqueires.

20. THE OFFICERS OF THE CASA DE GUINÉ TO KING MANUEL
WITH REFERENCE TO THE AFFAIRS OF SÃO JORGE DA MINA.
5 OCTOBER 1509¹.

Sir. We have received four letters from your highness, wherein you command us to reply to you and to explain certain matters contained therein relative to the government of the city of Sam Jorge da Myna, concerning which we all do as your highness commands.

In reply to what your highness says, namely: that you think that the chief cause of this negligence is that the guard upon the caravels here is not conducted with the necessary strictness; and that your pleasure is that we should consult as to the way in which we think the guard over the caravels ought to be conducted, and whether it would be wise to change the men who now undertake it and put in their places others of a different quality, and whether there ought to be more men or less, or whether an ordinance ought to be issued in regard to this matter for the better performance of your service; and also that we should at once write to your highness to tell you how many guards there are at present, giving their names and stating for how long each has served, and to report whether there is anyone who bought the office which he now holds by your licence;

Sir, the guard which is now kept in the caravels of Myna is what was always prescribed by the instructions of your highness, namely: as often as we can, we go into a caravel before anything is put on board, and in our presence the guards, who have to keep watch over it, conduct a thorough search below until nothing remains to be examined. After this has been done, the factor hands over the keys of the hatches, and the said guards then remain in the caravel, and they are not allowed to leave it either by night or by day, or at least one of them has to remain on board. Each day at nightfall, the keys of the hatches are carried to the said factor, who returns them again on the following day in the morning. Before the caravel sets sail, we always

¹ Torre do Tombo, Corpo chronologico, pt. 1, maço 8, no. 45. Translated. Printed for the first time. I am indebted to Mr. J. T. Furley for drawing my attention to this document.

go on board, and in our presence another search is undertaken of all chests, bundles and other articles, which we find upon deck. What is below deck cannot be searched and remains entirely the responsibility of the guards by the measures taken up to that time. A muster is taken, as required by the said instructions, and then we go ashore, and the caravel sets sail, the guards going in her as far as Rrestello. This, sir, is the order and government of the proceedings, and we think it such as is fitting for your service. With reference to this matter of gold which is thought to have come from Myna contrary to rule, we can neither presume nor believe ought, except that it was brought back in return for what was carried from here, contrary to your instructions and by means of these guards and pilots of the caravels, who are frequently and well enough warned and reprimanded by Estevan Vaz, as is fitting. Till now we have not discovered the men in your service, who commit such mistakes and neglect their duty; and, though it may be presumption on our part, we do not know for certain whether by this means in this case your highness receives so great a disservice.

It also seems to us that many things are carried from here by the caravels, which go to the island of Sam Thomee, and that from the said island they illegally exchange these things at Myna by the collusion of those who are there and who deal with them; and this is another loophole, whereby the order of your instructions may be often broken and your watch rendered useless, and for which there is at present no satisfactory remedy.

With reference to the changing of the said guards for persons of another quality, we think that what they now do can be done by any others whatsoever, provided they are more or less reliable and have perchance less fear and more courage. Good men, known as such, are needed for this business, and not any others whatsoever.

And the practice here is so well established for the requirements of your service that we are at a loss to know how to improve it, for the faults are not with anything else but in the mistakes made by the guards, and these are such that they cannot by any means be prevented, once the men are determined to do what they ought not.

The guards now on duty here are ten in all, namely: Joham Duarte and Francisco Ferreira and Tristram Roiz, a dependant of dom Gonçalo Coutinho, whom your highness appointed to their posts five years ago.

Amdre Cubellos, gamekeeper of the late king—may God keep him—who sent him here to serve this office twenty years ago and he is still on active service.

Joham Rabello, formerly a member of the palace guards of your highness, who appointed him to this post which he still serves. Ruy da Lagoa, groom of the chamber of the late king—may God keep him—who appointed him to this post fifteen years ago, and he still serves.

Esteuam Martinz, formerly a dependant of Fernam Serraao, who held the office in the time of Fernam Lourenço by purchase from a certain Pero Barroso, who used to be gamekeeper and guard by licence of your highness about seven years ago.

Pero Lopez, who was gatekeeper, whom your highness appointed to this present post about two years ago.

Joham de Freitas, formerly an overseer of the Casa de Ceita [Ceuta], and Pero Gomez, formerly a clerk supervising the unloading of ships and an officer of the customs house, whom your highness appointed to these posts about one year ago.

With reference to the question of your highness whether these be too many or too few, this is an adequate number for the caravels of Myna only, but for the business and the ships of Yndia there should not be less.

With reference to the system which your highness regards as objectionable, whereby the pilots and mariners of the caravels of this Casa make up the packs and pack up the goods, which have to go in each caravel, within the said Casa, just as has always been done up to now, when this work could be adequately done by men employed by the treasurer, since this business is small and irregular *etc.*:

This system of packing by the mariners is followed, and always was followed formerly, because, though your highness may think it a trifling matter, yet eight or ten persons at least are necessary and are occupied for five or six days in shaking the *lambees* and in doubling and packing them, and in the counting

and weighing of the manillas and the brass, which is always in great quantity and requires much handling; and with fewer people preparations for the departure of the caravels could not be undertaken without a delay of many days, and this would upset other business of the Casa, and it is therefore not expedient to change the procedure. Because Steuam Vaaz during the last few days has suspected that the mariners have, or may have, put some shells and *cotryns* (?) and sundry other things in the packs, in future when the said cloth is given out, we are to be present, and the said packs will not be made up except in our presence, so that we may observe everything closely in such a way that henceforward nothing shall happen in this business contrary to your service.

With reference to the red wines which go for the supply of Myna, whereof your highness has been informed that they are such as go bad and are useless either as wines or as vinegar, and that thereby you are badly served, and whereas you command us to find out at once where these wines come from and why they go bad here, and also to ascertain where better wines could be obtained, so that they would not go bad and there would be no disservice; sir, we cannot explain this to your highness, because the said wines are bought and sent to Myna by Jorge de Vascomcellos and the officers of the warehouse, who by your highness' command and ordinance have charge of the business of supplying all provisions not only to Myna but to other parts. We buy no other wines than those of Caparica for sale at Myna and they are sent as merchandise¹.

Your highness may order Jorge de Vascomcellos to be questioned about this. As for the question where the best wines are, it is known that those from Ribatejo and the environs of this city are such, and it is from there, as Estevam Vaaz says, that stocks are supplied to Myna and also for the use of the captains, clerks and mariners of the caravels, and he has already written many times to tell your highness of this.

¹ There was an officer in charge of wines at São Jorge da Mina. By decree of 16 June 1514, King Manuel ordered Ruy Leite to give 6000 reis to Martim Affonso, 'who was clerk of the wines in the city of S. Jorge da Mina'. Torre do Tombo, Corpo chronologico, pt. I, maço 15, doc. 58. I am indebted to Mr. J. T. Furley for this reference.

With reference to the business of Francisco Frooez' having been paid his salary before he rendered his account of the factory of the old linen, he was paid his salary along with the other clerks and residents, who came with Bobadilha, after they had presented a certificate from Ruy Gomez, judge of Guinee, to Joam Martinz, showing the sum which they were to pay on these bills through Joham de Ferreira, who entered the payments, and this certificate states that they are not disallowed by your highness. He was paid like all the others. Because he was not appointed from here to be factor of old cloth but succeeded there through the vacancy of Amdre da Gama, it was not realised that anyone else but the factor of Myna would have to render an account and for this reason have his salary stopped. Now, as soon as we saw this order from your highness, he was summoned to this Casa and pressed either to return his salary or to provide the Casa with security until he had rendered account. In reply, he surrendered himself a prisoner, and gave a pledge of fulfilment to render account or to refund his salary by command of your highness, who shall be obeyed in this as in all other matters for the good of your service.

Joham Rabello is taking the instruction, which was here in this Casa, for the direction of the captain, factor and officers of Sam Jorge, which your highness orders us to send you, and it is a copy of that which was there, and includes a copy of the register of some letters and patents which your highness sent there after the said instruction had been made. No other copy remains here, and it would be fitting for your highness to order it to be returned, for it could not be copied being despatched at once. Written from Lixboa, on 5 October 1509.

When Francisco Froez was paid, I, Esteuam Vaz was in Syntra by command of your highness.

Esteuam Vaaz

Ruy Gomez

Aluaro Barroso

Yohão de Ferreira

Letter from the Casa da Mina now in reply.

To our lord, the king.

From the Casa de Guinee.

21. MAMEDE DE GOIOS TO KING MANUEL. SÃO JORGE DA MINA. 22 JANUARY 1510¹.

Sir. The caravel *Santi jafonso*—may God guide it safely—the captain being Diogo Pereira, carries six thousand five hundred dobras for one hundred and thirty marks. It reached this city one day before the departure of the *Santa Cruz*. It was despatched in eleven days, being a great ship, and the *Santa Cruz* prevented its departure for one day.

Your highness wrote me a letter about the holding in the ships of the fairs for the sale of goods which they bring for the provision of the residents, and you said that they should be held in accordance with the clause of the regulations which states that they are to be on the shore and by two persons; and I have written to your highness to say that they cannot be held on the shore, because the land is so hot that no-one could endure the heat for very long without covering, and it would be necessary for the captain, the officers, and the residents to be present. . . . [The fair, if on the shore,] would be an interminable transaction, hindering the departure of the caravels and endangering the security of this 'lodge'², because of intercourse being cut off between the residents and the mariners and also the negroes; and, as I have written to your highness, this could not be done without a gate in the drawbridge of the moat, so that the negroes may not approach the *rramada*³, or where the residents are, without a commission; and therefore I shall not allow this ship,

¹ Torre do Tombo, Corpo chronologico, pt. 1, maço 8, no. 72. Printed for the first time. The MS. is badly mutilated, the writing in places illegible, and the grammar extremely confused. Doubtful passages have been omitted from this translation. Mamede de Goios wrote in the vague, circumlocutory style of many of his contemporaries in the Portuguese colonial service. He was unusually illiterate.

² Portuguese 'casa', which Mamede used to signify the factory within the castle of São Jorge da Mina, rather than the castle as a whole.

³ This reference to a *ramada* seems to confirm C. R. Boxer (*Commentaries of Ruy Freyre de Andrade*; 1930), who in a footnote (p. 127) writes, 'There is no exact English translation for "ramada" that I know of. It was a kind of roof or shelter of planks, branches and foliage, etc., placed over small vessels drawn up on a beach, to protect them (apparently) from the sun'. Goios's remarks about the moat and the drawbridge of São Jorge da Mina form the earliest reference to their existence.

or any other, in future to remove anything on to the land, so that no person among those of the ships may speak with any other from the fortress; and I took this decision as a result of another letter from your highness, which I received by this ship, wherein you again commanded that the fairs should only take place on the shore, which is where they cannot be held.¹ . . .

Also, I desired to stop any wine from going out of the ships to be sold to the residents. To this they responded by telling me that they were taking it in accordance with the regulations of your highness, issued by Esteuam Vaaz, and that they had always added the customs on it to your account and that it had been paid to you from here, without any embargo being placed upon it; and although great injury was thereby inflicted upon both yourself and the residents, this was ignored, and only the resulting advantage to the barter of the wine of this 'lodge' had been observed, so that at least three or four pipes arrive in every caravel. Although I order it all to be stored in the warehouse and to be given to the owners in accordance with custom, one may suppose that, when they buy at nine or ten milreis per pipe, it is not all to be sold to the residents, for there would be little profit in that. Your highness should consider this and remember that, if the people who have to live in this 'lodge' do not obtain from the captain the wine, which they have been accustomed to drink and to draw from him, they may not buy anything from the ships. It is necessary that all the wine that comes by custom should be from Caparica, because all the other goes bad, and for this reason they were always allowed to buy it.

In the regulations of this 'lodge' there is a patent, by which your highness commands all captains to hold at fixed times in the year a general inquiry, by virtue of certain articles contained therein. I spoke about this to Bonadilha², and he told me that he did not think it was in the service of God or in the interest of your highness, and for this reason he had not held any [enquiry?].

¹ By a decree of 20 July 1519, King Manuel forbade pilots of ships, going to Mina, from entering into the fortress of São Jorge da Mina, except on the day of the fair. Torre do Tombo, maço 2 de leis, no. 124. I am indebted to Mr. J. T. Furley for this reference and this information.

² Bobadilha was evidently governor of São Jorge da Mina during the years 1509-10. See the preceding document.

Then in a memorandum I proposed to him with other things that he should speak to your highness about this to find out whether one should be held in a manner more to your advantage. I have seen no reply to this, and it is necessary to learn the wishes of your highness in this matter. . . .

This 'lodge' is at present in good health by the grace of Our Lord, so that we have no more than three sick men in the infirmary. From this your city of Sam Jorge, on 22 January 1510. I kiss the hands of your highness.

To our lord the king.

Mamede de Gojos¹

A letter from Mamede de Gojos to the king, concerning one received from his majesty about the fairs which were to be held for the goods brought by the ships for the provision of the residents, to the effect that the fair could scarcely be on the shore, because the land was very hot and the people could not walk there except under shelter. From the city of S. Jorge, on 22 January 1510.

22. ACCOUNTS OF JOÃO DO PORTO. 27 FEBRUARY 1510²

We now command an account to be taken from the wife and heirs of Joham do Porto, squire of our household, of everything which he received and spent from 15 July 1486 to the end of the year 1493, during which he was our customs officer of our slaves from Guyné in this our city of Lixboa; and also of everything which he spent in the fleets, namely: in the fleet of reinforcement for the city of Cepta [Ceuta] and in the fleet of Larache and Maamora³ . . . that is to say, 3,589 head of slaves and 16,511,876 reis, which during the whole of the said period he received and spent. [This total included] . . . during the first two years of his receipt . . . 19,400 reis as freight on our ships for some passengers who came in them from Mina and the island of Cabo Verde; and 550,000 from Fernam Lourenço, our treasurer of Guiné by Vicente Alvarez and Estevam Vaz; and 6,300,000 reis from Bertholameu Marchione, Florentim, which

¹ Probably the chief factor in São Jorge da Mina.

² 'Cartas de quitação,' no. 404. Extract, translated.

³ R. Larache and R. Mamora, on the Moroccan coast. In 1489 King John II organised two small expeditions with the intention of building a fort and a town on the banks of the R. Larache. See E. Prestage, *The Portuguese pioneers* (1933), p. 178.

he owed by virtue of his contract of the Rios dos Escravos; and 156,950 reis by the sale of 39 head of slaves, which he sold at various prices; . . . And 1,492,138 reis, which he received during the years 1489 and 1490, [including] 500,000 reis, which he received from Bartolameu Marchione, Florentim, in part payment of the 1,100,000 reis which he owed for his contract of the Rios for the year 1490; and 948,900 reis, which he received by the sale of 196 head of slaves, which he sold at various prices. . . . And . . . during the year 1492 . . . 2,200,000 reis from Bertholameu Marchione, Florentim, who payed them beforehand to the king, as an initial and part payment of the sum for which the Rios had been rented to him, with the addition from the year 1493 up to that of 1495; and 1,399,440 reis for the sale of 257 head of slaves, which were sold at various prices in the said year. . . . Given in Lixboa, on 27 February 1510. Alvaro da Maia made this.

23. ACCOUNTS OF ESTEVÃO BARRADAS, FACTOR OF SÃO JORGE DA MINA. 22 MARCH 1510¹.

We make known that João Vaz de Lemos, accountant of our household, has now come to our exchequer to explain the account which by our command he took from Estevam Barradas, knight of our household, of everything which he received and spent during the period when he was our factor in our city of Sam Jorge da Mina; and the receipt of his account shows that he began to receive in the said factory on 20 August 1504 and finished on 10 January 1507, and thus he served for two years, four months and twenty days. The said receipt shows that during the said period he received 4,563 marks, 4 ounces, 1 dram, 12 grains of gold from the said mine; and also he received 6,976 *lambes da mexona* [hambels of Messina] of various sorts, 2,507 *aljaravias tenezes* [*aljerevias* of Tenes], 69 *algueires*², and 2,905 *aljaravias d'aguara* (?), 1,582 shaving bowls, 520 urinal pots and 3,192 chamber pots, 1,133 shells, 1,894 rods and one third of linen of all kinds, 287,813 manillas of brass and copper, 440 head of slaves, male and female, and also many other goods and articles, which he is shown to have received, . . . which we have

¹ 'Cartas de quitacão', no. 181. Translated.

² A kind of mantle.

not named here, because they were many and of many qualities; and forasmuch as the said Estevam Barradas has rendered us a very good account with delivery, . . . we acquit and free him from obligation. . . . Given in Almeirim, on 22 March 1510. João Vaz de Lemos, accountant of our household, made this.

24. THE OFFICERS OF THE CASA DE GUINÉ TO KING MANUEL CONCERNING SÃO JORGE DA MINA. 27 SEPTEMBER 1510¹.

We have received a letter from your highness in reply to another, which we wrote you touching the affairs of Myna, by which your highness commands us to send to the factor and officers the *landees* [hambels?], *pintados*² and urinal pots, for which they sent. We have already written to your highness many times to say that some days ago the said *pintados* were not in the Casa, on account of which you commanded us to make haste as a matter of honour and for other reasons; and when we replied again to this, you wrote to say that Joham de la Serra had shown how these might be obtained. We would again remind your highness that in this Casa there are no *pymtados* which we can send to Myna, and since your officers write from there to say that without them gold cannot be obtained from the merchants, who do not ask for other linen, we pray your highness to command care to be taken, so that your service may come to be fulfilled in such a way that they are obtained, since they are so necessary. And we are sending the urinal pots and chamber pots by the caravels in the quantities required and of the kinds requested. Written from Lixboa, on 27 September 1510.

Estevam Vaz

Ruj Gomez

Aluaro Barroso

Yoão de Ferreira

[On the reverse.] To our lord, the king.

From the Casa de Guinee.

From the Casa da Mina.

¹ Torre do Tombo, gaveta 15, maço 1, no. 14. Translated. Printed for the first time.

² Pintadoes, a sort of printed chintz or calico, from the East Indies.

25. CONDITIONS IN ARGUIM CASTLE. FRANCISCO DE ALMADA TO THE OFFICERS OF THE CASA DE GUINÉ. 9 NOVEMBER 1510¹.

Your excellencies, the factor and officers of the Casa de Guiné. By Gonçallo Fernandez, master and pilot of the caravel *Sam Miguel Fadiguase*—may God take it safely home—of this castle, I send you sixty head of slaves, whose ages are noted in a bill of lading about them, which goes inside this letter. I send them at this time out of necessity, since there are so many slaves, because besides those which are thus sent I still have here in the factory one hundred and thirty head of slaves. Therefore, I have to inform you that you must at once send me one hundred moios of corn, because little remains available for use here; and I did not send by other ships to ask you for it, because I did not think that that was to happen which has come about, for they take it each day, and they need it both for trade and to eat. As time goes on, I shall keep you informed about it by the ships which arrive.

Item. There is no merchandise here in this house for the pursuit of trade. The principal and great need now is for *abanas*², not only because this is the cold season, but also because none come hither overland as usual, owing to the war which they wage with the people inhabiting the ports through which the said linen usually arrives; and also they need as much linen *de Laquer* (?) as possible. Because, sirs, I have described to you by a memorandum all the other commodities of merchandise, of which there is not a single thing here, I excuse myself from noting them all in detail but refer to them all in the said memorandum. I ask you as a favour not to send from there anything less, because it is the service of our lord the king, and I ask of you nothing excessive.

Item. I ask of you as a favour, if you want gold, since upon several occasions you have written to say you fear lest I do not

¹ Torre do Tombo, gaveta 20, maço 2, no. 66. Translated. Printed for the first time.

² The *abana* was a kind of Moorish mantle. Variant forms are '*abanas*' and '*alquicos abanes*', in the first the term being used as a noun, in the second as an adjective to specify the type of *alquice*.

send it to you, not to omit mastic and rods of brass and saddles with all the harness for horses, because there are none here, and some head-stalls and spurs with tortoise eyes, and some hoods of Ipre [Ypres] *sem maneiras* (?) and decorated with crimson silk. Further, I have to report to you that there is not such a thing as a coverlet of Alemejo or of Galveu [Galway] for the freemen or beds and coarse cloth for the suits of the said residents.

Also, sirs, there is no ink here or the material for making it, and I ask you as a favour to send some or some of the material for making it, and thread for the large fishing-net which you sent here as a great kindness, because it is delicate and rotten, and they cast it every day, because we have nothing else to eat by reason of the Mouros having no meat.

Sirs, I ask you as a favour not to withhold anything from that caravel, because, in addition to our great need arising from our lack of the said articles and from the daily use of them, our people here are very few in number among many black men apart from those I daily expect from traffic, for the people of this land are close by and they arrive daily, and we are exposed to danger from the slaves since we are so few. Also I ask you as a favour to send the ship or ships with the equipment at once and speedily, because in addition to the aforesaid reasons, the negroes are dying and many are lost, for there are many here, and more in the winter, and we recommend you in your favour to see that they bring sufficient water. From Arguim, on 9 November 1510.

Francisco de Almada
Gonçalo de Villalobos

Whereas, sirs, I tell you at the beginning of this letter that I still have one hundred and thirty head of slaves, I have now to notify you that, after this letter had been finished, I bought a further thirty, who then came altogether, and thus there remain in this house one hundred and sixty, apart from those which I daily expect, because the Alarves [Moors] are all two days journey from this castle, which is the nearest they can be. There is a great need of good 'abanas' and linens of Laquer, and there is

a great demand for saddles and all other articles. I ask you as a favour at once to despatch the ships that they may get this equipment, and let them bring all that I ask in abundance, because I do not ask as a matter of form. We remain exposed to danger, because there are few of our men among many black men, and the houses are frail and there are no fetters.

Francisco de Almada
Gonçallo de Villalobos

Sirs, after this account of the factory had been completed and signed, the steward informed me that there was no treacle, not one canada¹ of it. The trade is great, and these Alarves are not men of reason. If you desire the king, our lord, to make profits, you should at once send one pipe of treacle, because many days occur when thirty or forty Alarves eat in this house.

Francisco de Almada
Gonçallo de Villalobos

60 head of slaves came from Arguim and 160 remain there.

To the factor and officers of the Casa de Guyné of our lord the king.

26. ACCOUNTS OF FERNÃO DE MELLO, CAPTAIN OF SÃO THOMÉ ISLAND. 9 DECEMBER 1510².

We command an account to be taken from Fernam de Mello, nobleman of our household and captain of our island of Sam Thomé, of the 16,000 manillas, which he received from an officer of the Casa da Mina for the barter of the slaves and the pepper in the rivers³ of the said island, as is declared in detail by a contract which we have made with him; and also of the 1,877 manillas, which he received likewise from our factor of Benim, namely: 550 from Frandes [Flanders], 530 of copper, 600 of brass, and the remaining 140 of thick copper, and one of these is counted as two of the others; and also of 1,360 reis in money for the value of these articles, namely: 440 reis which was the

¹ Portuguese measure for liquids.

² 'Cartas de quitacão', no. 228. Translated.

³ The rivers of the mainland, to which the islanders had been empowered to send ships for trade.

value of 22 collars with their links, 200 reis for 10 fetters, 140 reis for 7 irons for taking negroes of those which they make in Benim, 40 reis for one handsaw, 40 reis for one scythe for cutting, 60 reis for 3 round padlocks, 40 reis for one mattock, and the remaining 400 reis for one long and smooth chain with a fragment of another, which he also received from the said factor of Benim. He rendered us a very good account of all the said manillas and the aforesaid money . . . and therefore we acquit and free him from obligation. . . . Given in Santarem, on 9 December 1510.

27. ACCOUNTS OF BASTIÃO FERNANDES, FACTOR IN BENIN.
20 APRIL 1512¹.

We now command an account to be taken from Bastiam Fernandez, knight of our household, who was factor in Beny, of all money and goods, slaves and other articles, which he received and spent in one year, eight months and twelve days, during which he held the office; and also of those articles which he received by the death of Duarte Lopez; and of other articles which he received from Fernam de Espanha² and the officers of the Casa da Mina; and a similar account of those which he received himself through the barter of the said goods. . . . Given in Lixboa, on 20 April 1512. Pero Fernandez made this.

28. AFFONSO CALDEIRA TO KING MANUEL. SÃO JORGE DA MINA. 2 JANUARY 1513³.

Sir. After respectfully kissing the royal hands of your highness, I report, sir, that since writing that first letter to your highness, wherein I gave you an account of affairs here on the last day of January, the king of Afuto [Fetu] and the king of Aypyá [Yabi?] came here. These princes, after giving hostages to Pero Nunez and Afonso Seram, were welcomed with full

¹ 'Cartas de quitacão', no. 574. Extract, translated.

² Treasurer of the Casa da Mina.

³ Torre do Tombo, Corpo chronologico, pt. 1, maço 12, no. 72. Translated. Printed for the first time. I am indebted to Mr. J. T. Furley for drawing my attention to this document.

honours, as your highness may learn from all who go home from here; and they brought with them some of their brothers and relations, their principal knights. I offered them my hospitality in such a way that they were well satisfied. Your highness may rest assured that as long as I remain here, they will always be peaceful and at your service. This king of Futo [Fetu] is a very honourable person, a very truthful man and well inclined towards the service of your highness. He says that he wishes to be a Christian and also that all his land should become Christian. On the day of Our Lady, he attended the evening service of the mass, and he copied everything which he saw me do, and he says that he thinks the ritual of the Christians very excellent, and he asked me earnestly that this letter should be written in his presence to your highness, wherein he prays your highness to command a chapel to be built for him so that he may hear mass, and that I should see that he be made a Christian and also his wives—for there are more than one—and his children, and likewise his knights and people, and this very convincingly. He awaits a reply to this, and I shall not do anything until the command of your highness arrives. Also he told me that he prayed your highness to make him a present of a mule, or an ass, or a horse, on which he might ride; and further he desired a letter to be written to your highness that you might order a house to be built for him wherein he might live.

Item. Furthermore, he says that he prays your highness to send back after one year his son and dom Symão, so that here they may teach his people to be Christians; and he prays your highness to make him a present of two trunks, covered with leather, to hold gold as a safeguard against the fear of fire; and moreover, he says that he prays your highness to allow Pero Nunez to take charge of his son and to accompany him when he is to return. This [king of Fetu?]¹ says his son, whom they call Afonso, is a grave and truthful man, but I think him a great fool and worthless, and as such I hand him on to your highness. The other king of Aupyá [Yabi?], whom I had here, did not want his son to go there, and I considered it in our interest not to use force in this matter, because it is not necessary. This king of Futo

¹ Gap in the MS.

[Fetu] and the king of Aupya [Yabi?], and also all their knights, kiss the hands of your highness, and I have nothing more to report about this, except that I pray God to prolong the life and royal estate of your highness, even as your highness desires. From Myna, on 2 January 1513. From the servant of your highness, who kisses your royal hands.

Afonso Caldeyra

To our lord, the king.

From the late Afonso Caldeira—whom God preserve—which Pero Nunez delivered. 1513.

29. PREPARATIONS FOR THE DESPATCH OF MISSIONARIES TO BENIN. KING MANUEL TO RUY LEITE. 20 NOVEMBER 1514¹.

We, the king, command you Ruy Leite, receiver of the treasury of our court, and the clerk of your office to deliver to Bastiam de Vargas, receiver of the treasury of the Casa da Mina, two of the silk vestments, which are made in our treasury, with their albs and with all their appurtenances and complete in everything; and also one cloak of camlet of whatever colour you think fitting; and all this is to go to Beny, and the priests, whom we are sending there, shall take them. If these articles are not made in the treasury, we command you at once to cut them out and make them from such silks as you think suitable in price and colour and also from the camlet, and you shall deliver the whole to the said Bastiam de Vargas; and the bishop of Cafy [Safi] shall bless and consecrate the said vestments. We command you to do this quickly, because the ship, in which the said priests are to go, is soon to depart. And by this order, together with the acknowledgement from the said Bastiam de Vargas, made by the clerk of his office, wherein he states that everything has been registered upon receipt, and signed by both, we command the accountants to set it to your account. Done in Lixboa, on 20 November 1514.

The secretary made this.

The king

¹ Torre do Tombo, Corpo chronologico, pt. I, maço 16, no. 117. Translated. Printed for the first time.

Two complete vestments of silk and one cloak of camlet, which Ruy Leite has to deliver to Bastiam de Vargas, and which are to go to Beny.

30. RECEIPT FROM BASTIÃO DE VARGAS. 6 DECEMBER 1514¹.

I Bastiam de Vargas have received from Ruy Leite two vestments, namely, one of tawny satin with *savasteyro* (?) of black damask with all its appurtenances, lined with buckram and edged with white and red twisted silk, and with its alb; and the other of dyed damask with *savasteyro* of satin with all its appurtenances, lined with buckram and edged with twisted silk, and with its alb; and in addition one cloak of camlet with *savasteyro* of satin of Bruges, lined with buckram and edged with twisted silk of the said colours. These two vestments and the cloak are now registered by receipt under the name of the said Bastiam de Vargas by me Joham de Ferreyra, clerk of his office in Lixboa, on 6 December 1514.

Bastião de Vargas
Johão de Ferreira

31. ACCOUNTS OF GONÇALO LOPEZ. 17 DECEMBER 1514².

We command an account to be taken from Gonçalo Lopez, knight of our household and customs officer of our slaves and the twentieth from Guiné and factor of our islands, of everything which he received and spent in the said customs and factories during the period of three years, which began on 1 January 1511 and ended on the last day of December 1513. The receipt of his said account, which was taken and examined in our customs house by the overseers of our exchequer, shows that he received during the said period 27,428,975 reis, and he received this sum from the persons named below, that is to say: 4,236,927 reis from Rui Gomez, treasurer of the Casa da Mina, for as much of the twentieth of gold as came from Mina during

¹ Torre do Tombo, Corpo chronologico, pt. 1, maço 16, no. 117. Translated. Printed for the first time.

² 'Cartas de quitacão', no. 297. Translated.

the whole said three years¹, in which were included 40,000 reis which he received from him for the expenses of his office; 162,350 reis which he received from certain persons for the twentieth of slaves and other articles, which they brought to these kingdoms; 31,300 reis from certain passengers who went to Serra Leoa [Sierra Leone] and lived among the negroes; 28,615 reis which he received as part of the fourths of some slaves of theirs, which they brought to these kingdoms; 535,500 reis which he received from Joah da Afonseca, because he farmed the fourths, twentieths and tenths of the land of the island of Santome [São Thomé] for two years, which began on the day of San Joha 1511 and ended on the equivalent day in 1513, and this sum included the one per cent which he payed; 70,130 reis from Duarte Afonso and Duarte Bello, because they farmed the island of Anno Bom, which ended on the day of Sam Joham 1513, and this sum included the one per cent; 55,550 reis from the Count of Portalegre, because he farmed the hurzella [orchella] of the islands of Sam Nicolão, Santa Luzia² and nos Iheos (?) for one year, which ended on the day of Sam Joham 1513, plus the one per cent; 3,130,999 reis from Antonio Rodriguez Mascarenhas and Nicolão Rodriguez, because they farmed the islands of Santiago, Fogo and Maio² for three years, which began on the day of Sam Joham 1510 and ended on the equivalent day in 1513, plus the one per cent; 1,125,162 reis which the said Gonçalo Lopez received for himself by the sale of 1,352 dozen and 4 goats' skins, which came to him from the islands during the said three years of his receipt at various prices per dozen; 64,558 reis which he also received for himself for the sale of 57 moios, 18 alqueires of corn at various prices; 8,086,975 reis, being the value of 1,265 head of slaves, male and female, which he received from Rui Gomez, treasurer of the Casa da Mina, during the said three years of his receipt; 1,616,000 reis from Joham de Lila and Joham de Crasto, because the trade of Serra Leoa was farmed out to them for three years, which began on the day of Sam Joham 1510 and ended on the day of Sam

¹ The King of Portugal always received one twentieth of all gold brought from Mina.

² São Nicolão, Santa Luzia, Fogo and Maio were all included in the Cape Verde group of islands.

Joham 1513, and this sum included the one per cent; 393,900 reis from Francisco Martinz, because he farmed the Rio de Cenagues [Senegal] for two years, which began on 1 January 1511 and ended at the end of December 1512, plus the one per cent; 1,376,620 reis from the said Francisco Martinz for as much as amounted during the last year and a half (which began on 1 January 1511 and ended on the day of Sam Joham) of the three years, during which he farmed the Rios de Guiné, and this sum included the one per cent, because Joham de Figueiredo, who was receiver of the said slaves, had received as much before; 1,363,500 reis from master Felipe, because he farmed the Rios de Cantor e Gambea for three years, which began on the day of Sam Joham 1510 and ended on the equivalent day in 1513, plus the one per cent; 1,212,000 reis from the said Joham de Lila and his partners, because they farmed the Rios de Guiné for one year, which began on the day of Sam Joham 1512 and ended on the equivalent day in 1513, and this sum included the one per cent; 1,050,400 reis from Calliro Redolho, because he farmed the trade of malagueta for two years, which began on 1 January 1512 and ended at the end of December 1513, plus the one per cent; 606,000 reis from the secretary Antonio Carneiro, because he farmed the fourths and twentieths of his said island of O Principe for four years, which began on the day of Sam Joham 1510 and ended on the equivalent day in 1514, plus the one per cent; 112,000 reis from Andre Rodriguez, the receiver of the money from the sale of spices, for the expenses, by two inheritances; 1,504,800 reis from Eitor Nunez by eleven inheritances; 2,300 reis from Rui de Castanheda; 82,788 reis from Bertolameu Marchione by two inheritances; 44,000 reis from Belasar Fernandez, receiver of the Paço da Madeira; 26,000 reis from Joham de Borba, receiver of the ports of Antre Tejo and Odiana; 20,000 reis from Alvaro Diaz, customs officer of the island of Santiago; 140,000 reis from Alvaro Pimentel; 80,000 reis from Bastam de Vargas, the receiver of the money of the treasury of the Casa da Mina; 197,000 reis from Antonio do Porto, the receiver of the Casa of the said slaves; and the remaining 39,600 reis from Joham Godinho, the receiver of extraordinary monies from all these eleven persons, for the

expenses of his office. And 311 moios, 4 alqueires of corn, whereof 55 moios, 3 alqueires he received from Antonio Godinho, the customs officer of the island of Sam Miguel,¹ 68 moios, 15 alqueires from Luis Gonçalvez, the customs officer of Praia in the island of Terceira,¹ 43 moios, 46 alqueires from Francisco Martinz, the customs officer of the island of Graciosa¹, 60 moios from Antonio da Veiga, the customs officer of Fayal¹, and the remaining 84 moios from Diogo Girão, the customs officer of the island of Sam Jorge¹. And 25 quintals, 2 arrobes, 19 arrates and a quarter of red corn, which he received from the contractors of Serra Leoa, as the twentieth of 513 quintals. Also, many other things of various kinds, as is contained in the receipt, which are not enumerated by reason of their length. By the enclosure of his account, he is shown to have spent the whole of the said money and the aforesaid articles, and as he ought. . . . Therefore . . . we acquit and free him from obligation. . . . Given in Almeirim, on 17 December 1514.

32. BILL OF LADING OF GOODS DELIVERED TO GONÇALO FERNANDES FOR TRADE AT TOFIA POINT. ARGUIM. 8 JULY 1515.²

Let those who see this bill of lading know that it is true that Gonçalo Fernandez received from Estevão da Gama³, captain of this castle of Argujm, this merchandise and these commodities, in order to go to pursue trade at Pomte de Tofya in the caravel belonging to the Castelhanos⁴, whither he goes by his order.

Firstly, he received 16 moios of corn and 9 fanegas⁵ 16 moios 9 fanegas

¹ S. Miguel, Terceira, Graciosa, Fayal and São Jorge are all islands in the Azores group.

² Torre do Tombo, *Corpo chronologico*, pt. 2, maço 59, No. 89 (1). Translated. Printed for the first time.

³ Estevão da Gama had been captain of Arguim since early in November 1514. His immediate predecessor was Pero Vaz de Almeida (A. Baião, *Documentos do Corpo chronologico relativos a Maroccos* (1925), p. 130; *Revista Lusitana*, XI, 314).

⁴ These Castilian merchants must have received licences to trade.

⁵ A Portuguese measure of grain containing 4 alqueires.

And	10 <i>albernozes</i> ¹ , ornamented with flock silk	10 pieces
140 Moorish <i>alquices</i>	100 pieces [<i>sic</i>]	
24 <i>trazcumtes</i> ²	24 pieces	
12 half <i>tazcumtes</i>	12 pieces	
30 Moorish covados ³ of <i>comdado</i> ⁴	30 covados	
12 pieces of <i>bordate</i> ⁵	12 pieces	
20 <i>alquices ayquas</i> ⁶	20 pieces	
12 chamber pots	12 pieces	
12 shaving bowls	12 pieces	
4 pairs of silvered stirrups	4 pieces [<i>sic</i>]	
4 bridle-bits	4 pieces	
6 pairs of silvered spurs	6 pairs	
1 dozen caps	12 pieces	
1 dozen togas of <i>bordate</i>	12 pieces	
20 coverlets of Alemtejo	20 pieces	
4 <i>alambes</i> [hambels]	4 pieces	
1 ream of paper	1 piece	
2 pairs of silvered headstalls	2 pairs	
2 pairs of gilt headstalls	2 pairs	
2 pairs of gilt spurs	2 pairs	
6 silver marks	6 marks	
50 combs and 50 needles	100 pieces	
1 fanega, 1 alqueire and 1 loaf	3 pieces	
42 and one half of pack-cloth	42 rods and one half	
1 Portuguese covado, 1 Moorish and 1 rod	3 pieces	
3 pipes of water and one quarter	4 pieces	
7 barrels	7 pieces	
6 pairs of collars with 6 couplings and a key	12 pieces	
6 fetters with 6 rings	6 pieces	

¹ The *albernoz*, or *albarnoz*, was a type of burnous, made with coarse woollen cloth and not dyed.

² Variant forms are '*trazcumtes*', '*tazcumtes*', '*tascontes*', and '*alquices taxcuntes*'. The *tazcunte* was a kind of Moorish mantle.

³ The covado was a Portuguese measure, containing $\frac{1}{4}$ yard, or 1 Flemish ell.

⁴ '*Comdado*', '*condado*', or '*pano de condado*'. A type of cloth, perhaps exported from Antwerp, and possibly taking its name from the town of Condé in N. France.

⁵ Pacheco records (*Esmeraldo*, bk. I, ch. 20) that the inhabitants of the kingdom of Fez (Morocco) bought 'fine handkerchiefs and other coarser ones, which they call *bordateis*'. *Bordate* seems to have been a cotton fabric, mostly manufactured in Egypt.

⁶ '*Alquices ayquas*', or simply '*ayquas*', were haiks. The term *ayqua* was apparently a Portuguese rendering of the Arabic word for haiks.

1 axe and 1 scythe	2 pieces
2 darts for fishing with their hafts	2 pieces
1 hand-gun, and 1 hand-gun with its ramrods	2 pieces
1 kettle for negroes and 1 copper kettle	2 pieces
10 barrels full of biscuit	10 pieces
2 bales of pack-cloth	2 pieces
47 bags which go with corn	47 pieces
1 pile of two marks and some scales for weighing gold, and eight weights	10 pieces
6 manacles	6 pieces
2 spears	2 pieces
6 musket-balls of lead	6 pieces
3 cowhide shields	3 pieces
1 hammer	1 piece
1 canada of wine	1 piece

Because it is true that the aforesaid received all these goods,
I gave him this bill of lading, made by me, Jacome Botelho,
clerk of this castle, and signed by both. Done in this castle, on
8 July 1514 (?).
Jacome Botelho

Gomçallo Fernamdez

13. BILL OF LADING OF GOODS DELIVERED TO GONÇALO FERNANDES FOR TRADE AT SETE MOUTAS. ARGUIM. 30 JULY 1515.¹

Let those who see this bill of lading know that it is true that Gonçalo Fernandez, master of the ship *Santa Catarina*, received from Estevam da Gama, captain of this castle of Arguj, these commodities, in order to go to pursue trade in the said caravel at Sete Moutas, whither he is now going.

Firstly, he received 33 moios 38 alqueires of

corn	33 moios 38 alqueires
And 40 <i>albernozes</i> , ornamented with flock silk	40 pieces
14 <i>alquices taxcuntes</i>	14 pieces
18 half <i>taxcuntes</i>	18 pieces

¹ The MS. contains 'julho de bxiv' (July 1514). But this must be an error for July 1515, because Pero Vaz de Almeida was captain of Arguim on 3 November 1514 and Estevão da Gama did not take up his duties until after this date. See Braancamp Freire, 'A gente do Cancioneiro', in *Revista Lusitana*, tom. xi (1908), p. 314.

² Torre do Tombo, Corpo chronologico, pt. 2, maço 59, no. 89 (2). Translated. Printed for the first time.

20 <i>cardoes</i> ¹	20 pieces
11 <i>allquices aygas</i>	11 pieces
28 coverlets of Alemtejo	28 pieces
200 <i>alquicos abanes</i>	200 pieces
44 hats of <i>bordate</i>	44 pieces
10 pieces of <i>bordate</i>	10 pieces
4 hoods of Ipre [Ypres] cloth, green	4 pieces
10 chamber pots	10 pieces
10 shaving bowls	10 pieces
2 tinned pots	2 pieces
4 pairs of silvered stirrups	4 pairs
6 pairs of silvered spurs	6 pairs
2 pairs of gilt spurs	2 pairs
2 pairs of gilt headstalls	2 pairs
2 pairs of silvered headstalls	2 pairs
9 rods of pack-cloth	9 rods
50 combs, 50 looking-glasses and 40 needles	140 pieces
2 reams of paper	2 pieces
32 alqueires of meal for the slaves	32 alqueires
19 bags of biscuit	19 pieces
1 crossbow with its racks and 12 of its arrows	1 piece
1 hand-gun with its ramrod and another hand- gun with its ramrod	2 pieces
2 spears	2 pieces
1 copper couple	1 piece
1 lantern	1 piece
9 pipes and one quarter	10 pieces
1 barrel of bread, and he gave up those which he carried on another voyage	1 piece
1 chisel and 1 <i>gyva</i> ²	2 pieces

Because it is true that he received all these things, besides these others mentioned in this other bill of lading which precedes this, I gave him this bill of lading, made by me, Jacome Botelho, clerk of this castle, and signed by both. Done in this castle of Arguj, on 30 July 1515.

Jacome Botelho
Gonçalo Fernandez

The pack-cloth, which Gonçalo Fernandez carried in these two covados, I, the clerk, registered with the rest as an expense, because it came with the slaves and I saw it spent.

¹ Moorish mantles, sometimes written *cardões alquices*.

² Gyve, fetter.

34. BILL OF LADING OF GOODS DELIVERED TO GONÇALO FERNANDES FOR TRADE AT ANTEROTE. ARGUIM. 15 SEPTEMBER 1515¹.

Let those who see this bill of lading know that it is true that Gonçalo Fernandez, master of the caravel for trade which he is now going to pursue at Amtonio Rota by his order, [received] 20 half *allquices tazcantes* [etc.]. . . . Because it is true that he has received all the said articles, I gave him this bill of lading, made by me, Jacome Botelho, clerk of this castle, and signed by both. Done in this castle of Arguj, on 15 September 1515.

Jacome Botelho
Gonçallo Fernandez

35. ACCOUNTS OF ANTONIO DO PORTO. 30 OCTOBER 1515².

We now command an account to be taken in our Customs House from Antonio do Porto, squire of our household, and formerly receiver of our twentieth and slaves in our city of Lixboa, of all the money and articles which he received during the past year 1514, namely: in money 10,027,681 reis, and 1 brass bowl, 1 kettle, 3 balances and 7 iron weights, 1 crossbow for taking negroes, 14 sacks of biscuit and 1 additional quintal, 15 pots of oil, 1 kettle, 1 *arquibanco*³, 1 glassbox, 12 negroes, 2 alqueires of flour, 1 civet-cat, 150 arrates of spices, 1,523 skins, 197 moios, 32 alqueires of corn, 8 quintals and 6 arrates of *urzella* [orchella], 2 arrobes of *sangue dadragam*⁴, and 1,269 quintals and 1 arrobe of pastry. The receipt of his account, which was examined in our said Customs House by the overseer of our exchequer, shows that he rendered us a good account of everything. . . . Therefore . . . we acquit and free him from obligation. . . . Given in Lixboa, on 30 October 1515. André Rodriguez made this. The said 10,027,681 reis he received from

¹ Torre do Tombo, Corpo chronologico, pt. 2, maço 59, no. 89 (3). Extract, translated. Printed for the first time.

² 'Cartas de quitacão', no. 103. Extract, translated.

³ Table, or seat, with drawer underneath.

⁴ 'Dragon's blood'. A resin obtained from the *Dracaena draco*, formerly used in medicines.

various persons including . . . 8,000 reis from Duarte Rodriguez and Giam Rodriguez as penalties for going to Serra; 1,817,000 reis from Christovam de Haram and his partners, contractors of Serra Lioa; 454,500 reis from master Felipe and Diego Lopez for the trade of Quantor and Gambea; . . . 525,200 reis from Carollo, contractor of the malequeta [malagueta]; . . . 70,128 reis from Duarte Bello and Duarte Affonso, renters of the island of Anno Bom.

DUARTE PIRES TO KING MANUEL. BENIN. 20 OCTOBER
1516¹.

Most high and mighty king and prince, our lord. May God increase your royal estate. Sir, your highness will be pleased to know how Pero Baroso gave me a letter from your highness, which made me rejoice that your highness should be mindful of so humble a man as I; and now I render account to your highness in regard to the letter which you sent me. Sir, with reference to what you say about my being in very great favour with the king of Benjm, it is truly so; because the king of Benjm is pleased with what I said in favour of your highness, and he desires to be your very good friend and speaks of nothing save what concerns Our Lord and your interest; and so he is very glad, and likewise all his noblemen and his people; and your highness will shortly know about this. The favour which the king of Benjm accords us is due to his love of your highness; and thus he pays us high honour and sets us at table to dine with his son, and no part of his court is hidden from us but all the doors are open. Sir, when these priests arrived in Benjm, the delight of the king of Benjm was so great that I do not know how to describe it, and likewise that of all his people; and he sent for them at once; and they remained with him for one whole year in war. The priests and we reminded him of the embassy of your highness, and he replied to us that he was very satisfied with it; but since he was at war, that he could do nothing until he returned to Benjm, because he needed leisure

¹ Torre do Tombo, Corpo chronologico, pt. 1, maço 20, no. 18. Translated. This document is printed in *Alguns documentos*, pp. 395-6.

for such a deep mystery as this; as soon as he was in Benjm, he would fulfil his promise to your highness, and he would so behave as to give great pleasure to your highness and to all your kingdom. So it was that, at the end of one year, in the month of August, the king gave his son and some of his noblemen—the greatest in his kingdom—so that they might become Christians; and also he ordered a church to be built in Benjm; and they made them Christians straightway; and also they are teaching them to read, and your highness will be pleased to know that they are very good learners. Moreover, sir, the king of Benjm hopes to finish his war this summer, and we shall return to Benjm; and I shall give your highness an account of everything that happens. Sir, I Duarte Pires, and Joham Sobrynh, a resident in the island of O Principe, and Grygoryo Lourenço, a black man and formerly the servant of Francysquo Lourenço, all remain in the service of your highness, and we have submitted proposals on your behalf to the king of Benjm, and we have described to him how your highness is a great lord and how you can make him a great lord. Done in this war, on 20 October 1516.

Duarte Pires

To our lord the king.

37. RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED UPON THE TRADE OF THE CAPVERDIANS BY ORDER OF KING MANUEL. 1517¹.

Dr. Ruy Gomes. We will and command that as soon as you have seen this, you shall order it to be proclaimed in that city and to be set up on gates and in public places that we think well of this copy of our prohibition, by which we forbid anyone to carry from these kingdoms or other parts to the island of Samtiagu or of Foguo [Fogo] of Cabo Verde any of those goods, which have been forbidden in the trades of Serra [Sierra Leone] and Guiné, under pain of surrender to our court of the goods and the ship on which they are carried.

Item. Furthermore, that no ship, which may go from here in the kingdom, or other parts soever, to the said island of Samti-

¹ Torre do Tombo, livro de registo de leis do Rei D. Manoel. Printed in Barcellos, 1, 84-5. Translated.

aguo, shall unload or embark its cargo, except in that port or appointed place, which we now order our corregedor and accountant is proper for this, whereby it may be searched by them; forasmuch as if any of the said forbidden goods are found, they are to be surrendered to our court with the ship and everything.

Item. Furthermore, that ships, which go from the said island to the trades, to which they can go, shall not carry any goods except of the growth and production in the island, and shall not go to Serra Lyoa, because it is forbidden; and in other parts to which they can go, they shall make no purchase except slaves for their own service and work, as is stated in the privilege given them about it, under pain of surrender of whatever they buy in addition and the ships and their equipment in the said manner.

Item. Furthermore, that none shall go as captains of the said fleets from the island to the trades, to which they can go, except inhabitants of the island, whites and not blacks, although the latter be freemen.

Item. That ships shall not depart from the island without first being searched and emptied by the said corregedor and accountant, and likewise on the return voyage shall not be unloaded without these officers being present, under the said penalty.

Item. That we hold as surrendered to us all the possessions of Christians who go into Guiné among the negroes. Although hitherto we have pardoned those who go into Guiné upon payment of a penance of ten cruzados¹, our pleasure is that this shall not be practised and that the penalties contained in our ordinances shall be imposed. . . . Alvaro Neto made this in the year 1517.

38. FRANCISCO DE MESQUITA TO FERNÃO LOPES CORREA. AXIM (?). 16 OCTOBER 1518².

Sir. We have examined the books of this factory, and we find that one hundred and ninety-nine small pots have been sold at

¹ The gold cruzado was originally worth 325 reis.

² Torre do Tombo, Corpo chronologico, pt. 1, maço 9, no. 85. Translated. Printed for the first time. Fernão Lopes Correa was the governor of São Jorge da Mina. I am indebted to Mr. J. T. Furley for drawing my attention to this document.

various prices, and that there are sixty-eight to be sold which are so defective and broken that we think they have been badly handled. Thus we certify it to you from this factory, on 16 October 1518.

Francisco de Mesquita

39. KING MANUEL TO ANTONIO PORTO CARREIRO, CAPTAIN OF ARGUIM. 2 DECEMBER 1518¹.

To Antonyo Porto Carreiro. We the king send you greetings. We are now commanding Duarte Borges, who is going at present as captain in this ship which we are sending to Myna, to make for that factory so that you may deliver to him forty or fifty head of slaves in order to transport and deliver them to our factor of the said Myna. Wherefore we recommend and command you to deliver to the said Duarte Borges, or to any other person who goes as captain of the said ship, the said slaves. You shall take his receipt for them until you are given another formally from the said factor of Myna. Moreover, we command you henceforward to send to the factor in all ships the slaves for which our officers of the Casa da Myna write to you. Whatever they ask of you by their letters you shall do, as if the letters were ours, because this is our wish, and for this we shall thank you; and you are to provide every favour, aid and quick despatch, which may be necessary, as we are confident you will. Written in Almeyrym, on 2 December 1518. Manuel de Moura made this.

The said slaves, which you are thus to deliver to him, are to be all males, or as many of them as possible. If there can be seventy head, you shall deliver this number to him, and they are to be the best to be had there, and they are to be neither boys nor old men but the best youths available².

The king

To the captain of Arguym about the slaves for Myna.

¹ Torre do Tombo, Corpo chronologico, pt. 2, maço 79, no. 25. Translated. Printed for the first time. I am indebted to Mr. J. T. Furley for drawing my attention to this document.

² Duarte Borjes would need this special authority to call at Arguim for the slaves. Clauses in the royal ordinances strictly forbade the captains of

40. RECEIPT FROM DUARTE BORJES FOR SLAVES DELIVERED TO HIM AT ARGUIM. 4 JANUARY 1519¹.

Duarte Borjes, captain of the ship *Samtylyfonso*, now on its way to Myna, acknowledged and admitted that he had received from Amtonio Portocarreiro, captain of this castle of Arguym, thirty-five head of slaves, male and female, which he is transporting in order to deliver to the factor of the said Myna, and as a true record thereof he gave him this receipt, signed by him and made be me, Nycolão Amtunex, on 4 January 1519.

Duarte Borjes
Nycolão Amtunex

Thirty-five head of slaves appear on the receipt side of the ledger of Johão Gago for the year 1519 on folio 216 in an entry which states that he received them from Amtonio Portocarreiro through the said Duarte Borjes by delivery to Manuel de Samde, factor in Myna. It is true.

41. ACCOUNTS OF GASPAR DE VILLALOBOS, FACTOR OF OLD LINEN IN SÃO JORGE DA MINA. 6 FEBRUARY 1519².

We command an account to be taken from Gaspar de Villa Lobos, knight of our household and factor of old linen in our city of Sam Jorge da Mina, for the two years and two months and twenty days, which began on 13 December 1516 and ended on 2 March 1519, during which he was entrusted with the receipt of the said factory. During the said period, it has been found that he received the following gold and articles, namely:

ships, destined for Mina or São Thomé, to call at other ports either on the outward, or on the return, voyage. It is true that they were permitted to enter intermediate ports, if they wanted to shelter from storms, or were in bad need of repairs, while ships of the contractors were allowed, if they were going to take on board cargoes of slaves, to put into Beziguiche and Portugal to obtain meal and hides. But otherwise, captains of all ships sent to Guinea were instructed to proceed only to their ports of destination and then to return straight back. The purpose of such strict injunctions was to prevent smuggling. See *As ordenações del Rey Dom Manoel*, v, 93-4.

¹ Torre do Tombo, Corpo chronologico, pt. 2, maço 79, no. 25. Translated. Printed for the first time. I am indebted to Mr. J. T. Furley for drawing my attention to this document.

² 'Cartas de quitação', no 273. Translated.

267 marks, 6 ounces, 2 drams, 66 grains of gold, by the sale of the goods here declared, namely: 114 *aljarvias* of every kind, 1,001 *alambeis* of every kind, 4 coverlets *alambeladas*¹, 1 *alquice*, and other things, which he received upon delivery from Baltasar de Bairros, who was factor of the said old linen, and declared in his receipt. The said receipt, which was examined in our exchequer by our overseers thereof, showed that the said Gaspar de Villa Lobos, the factor, has rendered us a very good account of the said gold and other articles. . . . Therefore . . . we acquit and free him from obligation.

Given in Evora, on 6 February 1519. Joam do Porto made this.

Although it states above that the period of his receipt ends on March 2, it is for two years and three months and eighteen days, which begins on December 13, as is said, and ends at the end of March 1519.

42. COMMAND BY FERNÃO LOPES CORREA, GOVERNOR OF SÃO JORGE DA MINA. 21 MARCH 1519².

I, Fernam Lopez Correa, captain and governor of this city of Sam Jorge da Mjna, command you, Manuell de Samde, at present the factor in it, to set to the account and expenses of Joam Framquo, the factor at Axem, one hundred and forty-nine defective small chamber pots, which he sold at various prices, in addition to the fifty which you sent him from here for sale. Wherefore, this will be added to your account with the record of the clerks of the expense which I order them to set to your account. Done by me, Johão de Seyxas, clerk of this factory, on 22 March 1519.

Johão de Seixas
Fernando Lopez Correa

Certificate for the lord captain from the factor of Axem about one hundred and forty-nine defective pots³, and the command of the captain.

¹ Striped coverlets.

² Torre do Tombo, Corpo chronologico, pt. 1, maço 9, no. 85. Translated. Printed for the first time. I am indebted to Mr. J. T. Furley for drawing my attention to this document.

³ A reference to doc. 38.

43. KING MANUEL TO THE FACTOR AND OFFICERS OF SÃO JORGE DA MINA. 13 FEBRUARY 1520¹.

We the king make known to you, our factor and officers of our city of Sam Jorge da Mina, that as a result of the good report we have received about Dioguo Lopez Auxy, our knight resident in that city, from Duarte Pachequo, nobleman of our court and our captain of the said city, who wrote to us about him, it is our pleasure to acquit him and to thank him for the twenty-four pesos of gold, which he owed us in our factory: we command that you take this from him in payment thereof, and accordingly we command our accountants that they transfer them to your account. Made in Evora, on 13 February 1520. Amtonio Affonso made this. And this shall not be omitted from the chancery.

The king

44. ORDER OF KING MANUEL FORBIDDING PRIVATE SLAVE TRADE IN AXIM. 20 MARCH 1520².

We the king make known to you, our captain, factor and officers of our city of Sam Jorge da Mina, since we thus think it to be in our interest and for the good of the trade of the factory of Axem, that after notice hereof we forbid the factor and clerks, who are in the said factory, or any other whitemen, of whatsoever condition they be, either to buy for themselves, or for anyone else there, any slaves, or to negotiate in this matter either in the market place or secretly, under the penalties which those incur, who are guilty and caught in the barter of commodities forbidden in Mina. These penalties we will and command shall be enforced against those who disobey, except that we permit our said factors of the said factory to buy them for us and then again to sell them, when they see that it is in our interest, all being done in the presence of the clerks of their office and entries being made on the expenditure side of their

¹ Sousa Viterbo, i. 239. Translated.

² Torre do Tombo, Leis e regimentos de Dom Manoel, no. 16A do fundo antigo, f. 162v. Translated. Printed for the first time. I am indebted to Mr. J. T. Furley for drawing my attention to this document.

accounts of the manillas and goods, which they give for the said slaves, and on the receipt side the said slaves, so that they may render an account of them, or of the gold for which afterwards they resell the slaves. Thus we give you notice hereof, and we command you at once to cause notice hereof to be given to this factor, who is serving at present, and hereafter to others, that we will that they shall keep and observe this as stated herein. And you shall cause this to be copied in the book of the regulations of that factory and in that of the house of Axem, so that it may be known to all and none may plead ignorance; and we command the judge of the business of Myna to take a copy of this, so that he may know what we thus forbid; and we command our officers of the Casa de Guinee to enter a copy of this in the books of the regulations of the said Casa, and to insert a note on the back of this, showing how they have taken a copy of it in the manner stated, and to send it to you on the first ship of this year, since it touches and concerns you. You are to cause this to be kept and observed in the manner stated. Done in Evora, on 20 March 1520. Amtonio Afonso made this.

45. DUARTE PACHECO PEREIRA, GOVERNOR OF SÃO JORGE DA MINA, TO THE FACTOR, JOÃO DE FIGUEIREDO. 8 AUGUST 1520¹.

I, Duarte Pachequo Pireyra, nobleman of the household of our lord the king, captain and governor of this city of Sam Jorge da Mina, command you, Jam de Figueiredo, the factor of our lord the king, to provide one *pintado* from Gonçalo Vaz, one strong *aljerevya*, three rods of *nabal* linen², one red cap, and one chamber pot, which I order to be given to the king of the Acames [Accanees?], and two small *aljerevias* for two of his knights, since this is the custom, and they are to be given by order of our lord the king, upon the arrival of his captains in this city; and also I command you to provide one *masona*³, one

¹ Torre do Tombo, Corpo chronologico, pt. 2, maço 91, no. 27. Translated. Printed in R. E. de Azevedo Basto (ed.), *Esmeraldo de situ orbis* (1892), p. xxii.

² *Nabal* (Port. *naval*) linen was a kind of ancient linen cloth.

³ A hambel of Masona [Messina].

small *aljerevia*, two rods and a half of *nabal* linen, and one red cap, which I order to be given to the king of the Abermus [Abaan?], because the ordinance of our said lord requires that he be given these things, since he happens to be situated on the road of the merchants¹; all these things I command you to give and deliver to Jam Vieyra, whom I am now sending there to visit them again; and I command you to give him for his expenses for himself and for two slaves, who carry these goods for him, and for one interpreter, who goes with him, six small *aljerevias*; and therefore with the record of the clerks of the expense, which I order them to issue on your behalf, this will be set to your account as expenses. Made by me, Vasco da Mota, clerk of this factory, on 8 August 1520.

Duarte Pachequo Pyreira
Vasco da Mota

46. THE SAME TO THE SAME. SÃO JORGE DA MINA. 18 AUGUST 1520².

I, Duarte Pachequo Pireira, nobleman of the household of our lord the king, and captain and governor of this city of Sam Jorge da Mina, command you, Jam de Figueiredo, the factor of our lord the king, to provide two rods and a half of *nabal* linen for one iron ring, which I command to be given to a knight of Afuto [Fetu], since in this way the service of our lord the king will be advanced. Therefore, with the record of the clerks of the expense, which I order them to issue on your behalf, this will be set to your account as expenses.

Made by me, Vasco da Mota, clerk of this factory, on 18 August 1520.

Duarte Pacheco Pyreira
Vasco da Mota

¹ The meaning of this is that the territory of the king of the Abermus lay across the trade route, normally taken by the merchants who brought gold from the interior down to the coast.

² Torre do Tombo, Corpo chronologico, pt. 2, maço 91, no. 2. Translated. Printed in Basto, p. xxii.

47. APPOINTMENT OF AFFONSO DE ALBUQUERQUE AS CAPTAIN OF SÃO JORGE DA MINA. 4 JULY 1522¹.

Dom Yoham [etc.] To all to whom this our letter shall come, we make known that we, considering the virtue and good sense of dom Afomso de Alboquerque, a nobleman of our household, and firmly believing that he will serve us well and faithfully in everything committed to his care and with such diligence and caution as is expected of him, and in consideration of his service and merits, we are pleased to appoint him captain of our city of Sam Jorge da Mina for the period stated in our regulations, and he is to hold the post in the same manner as did Duarte Pachequo till now, with all profits, perquisites, powers, honours and liberties, ordained for it and contained in the said regulations, and our provisoes which he carries for this; and thus we make this known to the said Duarte Pachequo, and we command him, upon receipt of this letter, to deliver up the fortress of the said city to the said dom Affomso with everything in it without omitting anything; and thus we command the factor, officers, residents and any others whatsoever present in the said city to hold the said dom Affomso as the captain thereof and to obey him in everything he orders, as is usually done in regard to our captains; forasmuch as we graciously grant the said captaincy to the said dom Afonso, as stated in this our letter, which we command him to be given. Given in Lixboa, on 4 July in the year of the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ 1522.

... Eanes made this.

48. ACCOUNTS OF GONÇALO DA FONSECA, CAPTAIN OF ARGUIM CASTLE. 26 AUGUST 1522².

By command of the king, my lord and father—may God bless him—an account was taken from Gonçalo da Fomsequa, nobleman of our household, for the period during which he was

¹ Torre do Tombo, Chancellaria de Dom João III, livro 51, f. 184v. Translated. Printed in Basto, pp. xxii-xxiii. This governor may have been a natural son of the great Affonso de Albuquerque.

² 'Cartas de quitação', no. 640. Extract, translated.

captain and factor in the castle of Argui, which was three years, five months and three days, and it began on 26 March 1505, when he entered upon his office, and lasted until 28 August 1508, when Francisco de Allmada replaced him. By the receipt of his account, he is shown to have been in receipt of the following goods and merchandise, namely . . . These goods, gold, slaves and all other commodities were shown to have been entirely spent in traffic both by delivery to our officers and by the commands and orders of my said lord and father, and in other expenses, all of which in good order were set to his account of expenses by our accountants and overseers of our exchequer, who examined and took the said account, as is contained and declared at length in the rendering of the said account, which remains deposited in the Customs House of our court.

. . . Given in Lixboa, on 26 August 1522. Francisco Afomso made this.

49. KING JOHN III TO AFFONSO DE ALBUQUERQUE, GOVERNOR OF SÃO JORGE DA MINA. 13 OCTOBER 1523¹.

We the king send you, dom Affonso, greetings. We have been informed that you are treating the knights of our village of Mina² there harshly, in such a manner that the village is depopulated and men are going away from there to other parts; and for these reasons, which have been pointed out to us, besides others which are said to exist, we regard it as a matter very prejudicial to our interest and primarily to the welfare of that city and its trade. Since they are Christians and have received the water of baptism, they must be defended, protected and instructed, and not banished; and this also, since they are our vassals, and live there in obedience to us and to you and to our captains of that city, serving in our name in everything ordered

¹ Ford, pp. 3-4. Translated.

² 'nosa aldea da Mina'. This must be a reference to the native town of Mina, originally known as the village of Two Parts, which adjoined the fort.

them for our service, and with their people and their *allmadias*¹ conveying to the *cabeças* the wood for all our ships² and, furthermore, since many of them buy on a large scale in that factory, and all generally make purchases of old linen, which is bought by them and sold in their *allmadias*. Moreover, we are told that there are rich men among them, and that slaves may be had from them, and all of them are at our command, or may be, should they be treated well and protected with that moderation in punishment and also in instruction, which is meet and proper for our service and their security; these men tell us that for all their services, they neither have, nor expect, from us any other reward than that we should protect them and command them to be maintained in justice. For this reason, it seems to us that you should not take it for granted that our interest would be promoted by your expelling them abroad; and if it is done to punish them, it seems harsh, because from expelling them two dangers may result, deaths and robberies. In the case of any others, should they deserve punishment, they are to pay a fine to that church,³ or something similarly adequate; we recom-

¹ Canoes. The natives, writes Bosman (*Description*, p. 110), 'use a sort of boats called *canoas*; the largest of which are about thirty foot long and six broad: from this size they go down to the smallest sort, which are about thirteen or fourteen foot long and three or four broad. The biggest of these being capable of carrying a reasonable merchant-man's boat lading; . . . they are rowed in proportion to their size, by two, three, five, seven, nine, eleven or fifteen rowers; which when they exceed two, must always be an odd number, because they are obliged to sit in couples, and an odd one is requisite to steer. Instead of oars, they use a sort of paddles made like a spade, having a handle about the same length; with which paddling the water with an under-hand stroke, they keep the *canoas* in a very swift course. With the least sort of *canoas*, with two or three men in each, they generally go afishing'.

² Port. *cabeça*, a chief, or headman. The reference to the timber for the ships is interesting, because it is reminiscent of a condition of affairs which normally existed years afterwards. During the eighteenth century, when the exact legal position of Europeans on the coast as tenants of the negroes was still vague, it was customary for the negroes to reserve to themselves the right to cut wood, and their European tenants could not afford to ignore or override this right for fear of antagonising them (E. C. Martin, *The British West African Settlements* (1927), p. 52). It would appear from this chance phrase in the above document that a similar custom was observed by the negroes on the Gold Coast even as early as 1523.

³ This is almost certainly a reference to the church of Santiago at Mina dedicated to Prince Henry the Navigator.

mend and command you, therefore, to treat them better and to dispense with banishments to the best of your ability; you shall rather protect them, and direct them to take the way most fitting for our service, taking care that they do not depart from it. Because this is in the interest of our factory there, and they are not to go about, reporting what they ought not about you and it; otherwise, besides losing them and the service which we receive from them, the merchants will not come with similar new things, since they come when the land is without them. Written in Tomara [Thomar], on 13 October 1523. Antonio Affonso made this.

J. The king

To dom Affonso.

To dom Affonso d'Albuquerque, nobleman of the royal household and captain of the royal city of Mina.

50. GRANT OF THE FACTORY OF SÃO JORGE DA MINA TO FERNÃO CARDOSO. 29 DECEMBER 1531¹.

Dom Joham [*etc.*] To all to whom this my letter shall come, I make known that, considering how Fernam Cardoso, knight and nobleman of my household, has served me well and faithfully, as befits my service, and wishing graciously to reward him, my will and pleasure is to make him a grant of the factory of my city of Sam Jorge da Myna for the period and after the manner contained in my regulations, and he shall be placed in possession thereof, provided first he complies with the conditions which had to be observed in regard to the said factory in previous years. Accordingly, I thus make this known, and I command the captain and officers of the said city that in the manner stated they shall place him in possession of the said factory, and allow him to serve for the said time and hold the said appointment, without any question and without any embargo being placed upon him heretofore, since this is my grant; and I command the factor and officers of the Casas da Imdia and Myna to register this in the said Casa, and to give him his

¹ Torre do Tombo, gaveta 14, maço 3, no. 2. Translated. Printed for the first time.

passage when the time comes, and to fulfil and keep this letter as is contained herein; and he shall swear in my chancery on the holy gospels well and truly to serve the said factory. Dom-jngos Payua made this, on 29 December in the year of the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ 1531.

The king

51. KING JOHN III TO THE COUNT OF CASTANHEIRA. 28 JANUARY 1533¹.

Count and friend. I the king send you greetings. You are well aware that Christovam Bramdan wishes to rent the fourths and twentieths of the island of Samtiaguo do Cabo Verde, with reference to which he made some observations which go with this to you. Because the renting of them may be effected to more advantage there, since there are persons there who are making offers in this matter, I strongly recommend you to examine the said observations and to listen to the said Christovam Brandão concerning them, and to ascertain whether there is anybody else there who may wish to take a share in this, to command the said lease to be publicly proclaimed and to let it be auctioned to him who gives most for it and as seems best to you; because what you do in this matter I shall regard as well done, and as such I shall command it to be firmly and effectively obeyed, as if it had been appointed by me. Pero Amrriquez made this, in Evora, on 28 January 1533. J. Fernam d'Alvarez caused this to be made.

The king

To the Count of Castanheira, about the fourths and twentieths of the island of Samtiago, which Christovam Brandão desires to rent; if they are auctioned there to someone who offers more for them, your highness will regard this as well done and will command it to be observed.

[On the reverse] By the king.

To dom Amtonio d'Ataide, Count of Castanheira, chancellor of the royal exchequer.

¹ Ford, pp. 80-1. Translated.

52. AFFAIRS OF MINA. THE SAME TO THE SAME. 3 FEBRUARY
1533¹.

Count and friend. I the king send you greetings. . . . Thank you very much for the news, which you send me, about the caravels from Mina. It appears well that they should not carry more than ten thousand dobras; it will be for the reasons which you have written. Hereafter, I hope that they may carry the quantity which in the past in the time of Estevā da Gama they used to carry; and, furthermore, I strongly recommend you to order care to be taken for the provision of Mina. And now, since the contract of pepper is ended, in which Francisco Lobo has one thousand quintals, you are to conclude the contract of the merchandise for Mina, as it was ordered and as you think it best for my service.

The king

[On the reverse] By the king.

To dom Amtonio d'Ataide, Count of Castanheira, chancellor of the royal exchequer.

53. THE SAME TO THE SAME. 2 SEPTEMBER 1533².

Count and friend. I the king send you greetings as one whom I dearly love. Here I have seen some notes, which Jorge da Costa made, about the commodities of trade which are transported from the islands of Cabo Verde and Samtiago and the island of Fogo in the ships which proceed to Guinee; and as some of the said commodities, which he notes therein, seem to be greatly to my interest, I have ordered him to go there, so that you may be informed about it and see the said notes which he carries; accordingly, I strongly recommend you to examine them with those officers, and discuss them with them and with persons whom you think ought to be conversant with this matter, listening carefully to the said Jorge da Costa in regard to everything contained therein; and after having received a report from him and having discussed the said notes, you are

¹ Ford, pp. 84-5. Extract, translated.

² Ford, p. 132. Translated.

to write to me to tell me with whom you have examined them and what you think ought to be done about them, so that with your report and reply, which you are to send me as quickly as you can, I may command that to be done in this matter which will be best and will most promote my service.

Pero Amrriquez made this, in Evora, on 2 September 1533.

John
The king

To the Count of Castanheira, about the notes which Jorge da Costa made.

[On the reverse] By the king.

To dom Amtonio d'Ataide, count of Castanheira, chancellor of the exchequer.

54. THE SAME TO THE SAME. 15 JANUARY 1534¹.

Count and friend. I the king send you greetings. . . . Item. With reference to the business of the fleet of Mina, for the reasons which Fernam d'Alvarez advanced to me, it is my wish that the galleon *Sam Joham* should sail in it, if no other *nau*² comes to this city which you think may serve this purpose; but should another arrive, I shall be pleased if this be done and it sail in place of the said galleon. Moreover, owing to the need which exists in Mina, on account of the long period during which no ships have sailed thither, I strongly recommend you to command that fleet to be made ready as quickly as possible. Also, you are to order him to provide the regulations, signed by you, about what the captain-major and the captains are to do on the voyage, and I shall send him my proviso to the effect that they are to observe them entirely, as if I myself had signed them. And you are to discuss there the people, whom you think ought to be left in the castle of Mina, and also whether some caravels ought to remain there for some time; and you shall then order provision to be made in accordance

¹ Ford, pp. 153-6. Extract, translated.

² I.e., *nau*, a large type of ship of between 400 and 1000 tons, with fore and aft castles and suitable for heavy seas. Scholars are not agreed upon the precise difference between the *nau* and the galleon.

with what you decide, and you shall order this to be declared in the regulations; wherefore I shall regard as well done what you do in this matter, because I know that you have to attend to this as befits my service.

Item. Fernam d'Alvarez also gave me an account of the attention which you ordered to be given to the *naao Sam Roque*, and how you ordered it to be examined so that it might be furnished and equipped to remain in this port; this I think very well done and necessary. I strongly recommend you that with the greatest possible speed you order it to be furnished and equipped and very well armed with artillery and everything necessary, so that it may be ready in that port for whatever befits my service. And if any *naao* arrives such as can serve in the Mina fleet, I shall be pleased if that *naao Sam Roque* and the galleon *São João* are both equipped, armed and made ready in that port, in order to assist in whatever happens and is necessary¹. . . . Pero Amrques made this, in Evora, on 15 January 1534.

John

Fernam d'Alvarez caused this to be written.

Reply to the Count of Castanheira.

55. THE ARGUIM TRADE. THE SAME TO THE SAME. 26 JANUARY 1535².

Count and friend. I the king send you greetings as one whom I dearly love. I have been informed that certain persons desire to engage in the trade of Arguy, including in it the Rio de Çanaga [Senegal]; and because I shall be gratified to see that done in this matter which will most promote my service, I strongly recommend you to order Fernam d'Alvarez, clerk of that Casa, to be summoned, and to learn from him how much the said trade and river have rendered in past years and the expenses, which have been incurred therein, and also who are

¹ King John III was concerned at this time about the French corsairs who were cruising off the Portuguese coast in great numbers. He was short of warships and probably wanted to use the *São Roque* and the *São João* to protect his coasts and safeguard home waters rather than to send them to Guinea as part of the annual Mina fleet.

² Ford, p. 204. Translated.

the persons who desire to undertake this and in what manner; because he knows all this, and he can inform you minutely of the agreement and terms which they desire to arrange; and you shall write to tell me what you think I ought to command to be done about the said trade. Pero Amrriques made this, in Evora, on 26 January 1535.

John

Fernam d'Alvarez caused this to be written.

The king

To the count of Castanheira, concerning the trade of Arguy.
[On the reverse] By the king.

To dom Amtonio d'Ataide, count of Castanheira, chancellor of the royal exchequer.

56. TRADE OF CABO VERDE ISLANDS. THE SAME TO THE SAME. 29 JANUARY 1535¹.

Count and friend. I the king send you greetings as one whom I dearly love. I commanded the reply to be examined, which the factors and officers of the Casa da India, with Afonso de Torres, gave to the notes of Jorge da Costa about the affairs with which you are acquainted relating to the island of Cabo Verde; and according to the said reply, it seems that the greater part of the said affairs are of considerable moment to my service; and that provision should be made after the manner noted by Jorge da Costa. But because the officers disagree with him in regard to some of them, I am pleased to command the said Jorge da Costa to go there with all the papers, so that, while you are now there, this business may be concluded. I strongly recommend you to order to be present the factor and officers of the Casa, and also Afonso de Torres, with the said Jorge da Costa, and you are to command them to examine all his papers and to discuss his notes in detail, listening to him upon the matter; and whatever they agree upon shall be forthwith written down and decided by the terms of the regulations, with all necessary declarations; and on doubtful points they shall

¹ Ford, pp. 204-5. Translated.

refer to you, and they shall give you an account of all these things, so that you may determine and decide them as you think best and most in my interest. And I recommend you to command this to be done as quickly as possible, since you know the time during which Jorge da Costa has been engaged in this business and how it befits my interest to have it concluded. Manuel da Costa made this, in Evora, on 29 January 1535. Whatever is decided in the whole matter shall be written down, and you shall send it to me, so that the necessary provisoes may be made.

John
The king

Fernam d'Alvarez caused this to be made.

To the count of Castanheira, concerning the notes of Jorge da Costa. John.

[On the reverse] By the king.

To dom Antonio d'Ataide, count of Castanheira, chancellor of the royal exchequer. John.

57. THE TRADES OF GUINEA. THE SAME TO THE SAME. 16 DECEMBER 1535¹.

Count and friend. . . . Fernam d'Alvarez has told me that Afonso de Torres is unwilling to give more for the trades of Ginee than eight thousand cruzados per year, and that for this rent he has taken them in previous years with my approval; and because, before any conclusion is taken in this matter, I would like to have your opinion, I strongly recommend you to discuss this matter with the factor and officers, or with whom you please, and you are to write to me to tell me whether it will be to my interest to give him the said trades for this price, and to tell me for how many years a contract ought to be made with him, so that with your reply an end will be made of this business. Fernam d'Alvarez made this, in Evora, on 16 December 1535.

John
The king

To the count of Castanheira.

[On the reverse] To dom Amtonio d'Atayde, count of Castanheira, chancellor of the royal exchequer. John.

¹ Ford, p. 244. Extract, translated.

58. THE MINA TRADE. THE SAME TO THE SAME. 29 AUGUST 1536¹.

Count and friend. I the king send you greetings as one whom I dearly love. Whereas certain questions have been raised in my exchequer on the part of the contractors of the island of Sā Thomee in regard to the auctioning of the price of the six hundred head of slaves, which the said contractors had to give for the trade of Mina, my pleasure is that you order the auction of the said price to be postponed until the fifteenth day of the month of September next, although by condition it ought to be held at the end of this month of August, so that during this time the said questions may be settled. Manuel da Costa made this, in Evora, on 29 August 1536.

John
The king

To the count of Castanheira, about the auction of the price of the slaves, which the contractors of the island of Sā Tomee have to give for the trade of Mina, and I command it to be postponed until September 15, although it ought to be held at the end of this month.

[On the reverse] By the king. John.

To dom Amtonyo d'Atayde, count of Castanheira, chancellor of the royal exchequer.

[In another hand] That this auction is to be adjusted, on the last day of August.

59. GOLD HIDDEN IN MINA. THE SAME TO THE SAME. 26 SEPTEMBER 1536².

Count and friend. I the king send you greetings as one whom I dearly love. I have seen the letter which you wrote to me, in which you say that Afonso d'Alboquerque told you that two or three men, who are in that city, were aware that in Mina eighteen or twenty thousand cruzados or pesos of gold were buried in a certain place, and that, upon an agreement being made with them, with which they were satisfied, they then stated the place

¹ Ford, pp. 266-7. Translated.

² Ford, pp. 275-6. Translated.

where the gold was, and that they arranged with you to give one fifth. I thank you very much for the diligence with which you informed me, for what you have done in the matter, and for what you note in your letter about it. I strongly recommend you to make with the persons who speak about it, or with whosoever discusses it with you, such an agreement as you please, in which you must not give them more than one half of what is found; and besides, should they not be the same persons as bought and buried it, then you are to do what you think right and in my interest in this matter; and everything you do I shall order to be entirely obeyed. To Afonso d'Alboquerque you are to say on my behalf that I thank him very much for the advice which he gave you, because it was the deed of a person who desired to serve me well; and that I recommend him that in the agreement, which is made, he is to take trouble with those persons, who speak with him, to make them satisfied with what is just, since the gold is mine and they cannot take it or have it by any good title. As soon as you have completed the agreement, you are to advise master d'Alboquerque about what he is to do, since you know what is fitting in such a business. Fernam d'Alvarez made this, in Evora, on 26 September 1536.

The king

Reply to the count of Castanheira.

[On the reverse] By the king.

To dom Antonio d'Atayde, count of Castanheira, chancellor of the royal exchequer.

60. PAULO NUNES SENT TO SÃO THOMÉ ISLAND. THE SAME TO THE SAME. 22 OCTOBER 1536¹.

Count and friend. . . . I have seen the news from the island of Sam Tome, and I will at once command Paullos Nunez to set sail. I strongly recommend you to order arms to be put in these ships and everything besides which you think necessary. And if Pallos Nunez is unable to go in this embarkation, he shall go in the first which goes after it; and I will command him

¹ Ford, pp. 289-90. Extract, translated.

to depart at once, so that he goes in this if possible. Fernam d'Alvarez made this, in Evora, on 22 October 1536.

The king

Reply to the count of Castanheira.

[On the reverse] By the king. John.

To dom Antonio d'Atayde, count of Castanheira and chancellor of the royal exchequer.

61. NEGRO RISING IN SÃO THOMÉ ISLAND. THE SAME TO THE SAME. 25 OCTOBER 1536¹.

Count and friend. I the king send you greetings as one whom I dearly love. Certain difficulties have arisen about the departure of Pallos Nunez, whereby it appears that he could not have departed at once, because he begs to be provided with the captaincy of the island of Sam Tomee and of all the land, in the same way as the captains of other islands, and this cannot be, since the corregedor, who carries his usual powers, is already on his way, and for other sound reasons which you must know well. Accordingly, my pleasure and service is that, if the corregedor has not departed yet, you are to discuss with the officers of the Casa, and with persons who ought to be conversant with this matter, what he, the corregedor, may and ought to do in the island against the rebel negroes in order to pacify them, while the said Pallos Nunez, or another, is not there; and you are to order him to be given instructions about this, signed by you; because I am writing to him to command him to obey it entirely. As soon as the form and manner of it can be decided, the said Palos Nunez, or someone else, is to go. Pero Amrriques made this, on 25 October 1536.

The king

To the count of Castanheira.

[On the reverse] By the king.

To dom Amtonio d'Ataide, count of Castanheira and chancellor of the royal exchequer.

¹ Ford, p. 290. Translated.

62. DESCRIPTION OF A VOYAGE FROM LISBON TO THE ISLAND OF SÃO THOMÉ, WRITTEN BY AN ANONYMOUS PORTUGUESE PILOT. c. 1540¹.

VOYAGE FROM LISBONA TO THE ISLAND OF SAN THOMÈ SOUTH OF THE EQUATOR, DESCRIBED BY A PORTUGUESE PILOT, AND SENT TO HIS MAGNIFICENCE COUNT RIMONDO DELLA TORRE, GENTLEMAN OF VERONA, AND TRANSLATED FROM PORTUGUESE INTO ITALIAN.

The Ships which leave Lisbona to go to the island of San Thomè to load sugar, the wind they sail by to the Canarie islands, called by the ancients the Fortunate islands, the island of Palme², and the promontory called Capo di Boiador.

As your excellency knows, before I left Venetia, signor Hieronimo Gracastor ordered me, in his letters from Verona, to transcribe for him, as soon as I reached the Villa di Conde, from some notes which I had told your excellency I had with me, the whole of the voyage which we pilots made to the island of S. Thomè, when we went there to transport a cargo of sugar; together with all that happened during our voyage to this island, that seemed to him so wonderful and worthy of the study of a scholar. Your excellency also, on my departure, made the same request to me; and so, having arrived here, I began at once to

¹ G. B. Ramusio, *Navigationi e viaggi* (1550), I, 125–9. The translation has been based upon the text of this, the first, edition. But the subtitles and the marginal notes, which Ramusio added in the text of the second edition of the *Navigationi*, published in 1554, have been included, and have been italicised. Neither the author nor the date of this interesting description of a voyage to São Thomé can be ascertained. The author may have been any one of the scores of Portuguese pilots who at this time were familiar with the navigation from Lisbon to the island. The description was written sometime between 1535 and 1550, after 1535, because the author refers to the fact that São Thomé had a bishop, and we know from other evidence that the island became the seat of the bishop of Congo in 1535, and before 1550, because in this year Ramusio, as stated already, first printed it in the first volume of the *Navigationi*. The exact time of the writing of the description is not actually of great importance, for the author gives a general picture of São Thomé as he saw it upon the several occasions when he visited it during the second quarter of the sixteenth century.

² Palma island in the Canaries.

write an account of the voyage in question, communicating also with some of my friends who took part in it.

Having read my account, and reflected upon it, I realised immediately that these writings of mine were not worthy of being read by such a great and distinguished man of science as signor Hieronimo—whose learning is proved by the books written for him which your excellency gave to me on my departure from Venetia; and I had almost decided to put my writings aside and let no one see them, when your further enquiry in regard to my obligation gave me courage, making me realise that, if I did not comply with your requests, which to me are like commands, I should appear unmindful of the many kindnesses and courtesies I have received from you, which are indeed infinite.

Then I decided rather to be regarded as rude and ignorant than as ungrateful and disobedient; and I am therefore sending you a few notes, which I made on other occasions, about the various people who live in the country north of Ethiopia: trusting that it will be understood that, as I am a sailor and not accustomed to writing, they are described simply and roughly, and that when they have been read, I beseech you to hide them, so that such mistakes as I have made, purely out of obedience to your wishes and not out of presumptuousness, will not cause you to curse me every time you read this.

The ships that set out to bring sugar from the island of San Thomè leave Lisbona, the capital of the kingdom of Portogello (called in ancient time Olissippo) 39 degrees above the equator, usually in the month of February (although some leave at all times of the year). They sail south-south-west as far as the Canarie islands, called by the ancients the Fortunate Isles, and reach the island called Palme, 28½ degrees above the equator, which is part of the kingdom of Castiglia [Castile], 90 leagues from a promontory in Africa called Capo di Boiador. This island has an abundance of grapes, meat, cheese and sugar; and when they reach it they have covered 250 leagues, or 1000 miles.

This part is most dangerous, since the sea is very rough and is perilous at all times of the year, but particularly in December, and above all when the north-east wind blows, which comes straight across the sea and does not touch land anywhere.

Sal island; why it is so called; the island of Bonavista and the island of Mario [Maio]; the wonderful number of goats in all the islands of Capo Verde.

From this island of Palme two routes may be taken. If the ships have been provisioned with salt fish (of which they take good care always to have enough), they go along by the island of Sal, which is one of the islands of Capo Verde, so called from one of the promontories of Africa. This island is $16\frac{1}{2}$ degrees north of the equator, and is always reached towards the southwest. On reaching it, they have covered 225 leagues from the island of Palme. With a good wind this voyage can be accomplished in 6 or 8 days. This island is uninhabited, as it is barren, and the only animals to be found there are wild goats. Since the land is below sea-level, the sea rises in the lagoons and creeks whenever the weather is good; and as the sun, coming from the tropic of cancer, passes perpendicularly above it, the water soon dries and salt is formed. This happens in all the islands of Capo Verde, and also in the Canarie [islands], but more here than elsewhere; and it is for this reason that it is called the island of Sale. Then there is the island of Bona vista, and not far from this the island of Maio, in which there is a lake more than two leagues long, and wide in proportion, full of salt dried by the sun, enough to fill a thousand ships. This salt is available to all, like the waters of the sea; and subjects of the kingdom of Portogallo pay nothing at all for it. In all the islands of Capo Verde, of which there are 10, the goats have three or four young at a time, every four months. The young kids are delicious to eat, and are fat and tasty. The goats drink sea water.

How those who sail to Africa can obtain a store of fish in four hours, and what the coast is like from Capo del Boiador to Capo Bianco [Cape Blanco].

But if the ships which go to San Thomé have no salt fish, and wish to take provision on board, they make their way towards the African coast, to the river known as the river dell' oro [Rio do Ouro], above which runs the tropic of cancer, south-south-east. When they sight Africa, they have covered 110 leagues. Near this coast, if the weather is calm and the sea not rough,

*Laguna di
Sale
[Salt
Lake].*

*Goats
which
bear three
and four
kids.*

Pagros,
Albori
Cutui
(sic).
Oneros
pessci
Tiburone
(sic) other
kinds of
fish.

they leave nets in the sea for about four hours, or else drop long flexible lines with many hooks attached, with which they catch all the fish they need; but the lines cannot be let down for long in the water, since immediately fish of all kinds, large and small, swallow the hooks: *pagros*, which in Venetia you call *alberi*, *corui*, and *oneros*, which is a larger fish than *pagri*, very fat, and dark in colour. When they are caught, they are slit along the backbone and salted, and they make a very substantial food for sailors. On this voyage one sees an enormous number of fish called *tiburoni*, which are very large, like tunny, and have two rows of extremely sharp teeth. Greedy for food, they always follow every ship they see, swallowing everything that is thrown overboard; and for this reason they are easy to catch. But we Portoghesi do not allow them to be caught, although they taste good; as we believe that they are poisonous; although all the Castilian sailors on voyages to the *terra firma* of the West Indies catch and eat them. If the ships do not run into calm weather by way of the river dell'oro, they go along the coast towards Capo Bianco, to seek calm seas, and from there as far as Argin [Arguim]. One thing which it is useful to know is that the whole coast of Africa, starting from Capo del Boiadore, that is, Capo della Volta (because those who sail to the islands of Canarie reach this cape of Africa, in $25\frac{2}{3}$ degrees, on their return, and turn back) is all low lying and barren as far as Capo Bianco, the position of which is $20\frac{1}{2}$ degrees. They continue as far as Argin, where there is a large port, and a castle belonging to our king, with a population ruled over by one of his governors. This Argin is inhabited by Mori [Moors] and negroes, and the frontier dividing Berberia and the negro country is at this point.

The island of San Jacobo [Santiago], and the great city called Ribera¹.

But to return to our voyage. From the island of Sal, we went to the island of San Jacobo, or Capoverde. This is 15 degrees

¹ This reference to the 'city' of Ribeira Grande is one of the inherent pieces of evidence enabling a date to be given to this description. Ribeira Grande, as explained above, was given the status of a city in 1533, and we may therefore presume that the author of this description began to write after this year.

north of the equator, and a journey southwards of 30 leagues. This island is about 17 leagues long, and has a city on the coast with a great port, called *la Ribera grande*, because it is between two high mountains, and is reached by a large river of fresh water, whose source is about two leagues away. From the mouth of this river to the city there are vast groves on either bank of oranges, cedars, lemons, pomegranates, figs of every kind, and for the last few years they have been planting palms which produce coconuts, or Indian nuts. All kinds of herbs grow well here, but their seeds are not good for sowing the following year, so each year they bring new plants cultivated in Spagna [Spain]. This city faces south, and is built of good houses of stone and chalk, in which numerous Portoghesi and Castigiani [Castilians] live; and there are more than 500 families. A corregedor, appointed by our king, lives there, and every year they elect two judges, one of whom supervises the harbour and navigational matters, the other dispensing justice among the people of the said island and the surrounding ones. This island is very mountainous and has many rough places barren of any trees; but the valleys are well cultivated. During the period of the tropic of cancer, that is, in June, it rains almost continuously, and the Portoghesi call it the moon of the rains [*la luna de las aquas*]. At the beginning of August they begin to sow grain, which they call *zaburro*, or, in the West Indies, *mehiz* [maize]. It is like chick pea, and grows all over these islands and all along the African coast, and is the chief food of the people. It is harvested in 40 days. They sow plenty of rice, and cotton, which flourishes well, and when gathered the people work this into different kinds of coloured material, which is marketed along the whole coast, that is, the negro country, and bartered among the negro slaves¹.

*Palms
with
Indian
nuts,
called
Coconuts.*

*Zaburro
grain,
large
maize like
white
chick pea.*

The various provinces of the West Coast of Africa, Guinea, the coast of Melegete [Malagueta], Benin, Manicongo; and the lords

¹ This maize figured prominently in local Guinea trade. Portuguese ships, bound for the islands in the Gulf, São Thomé, O Principe and Annobon, in order to embark cargoes of slaves, were allowed by the royal ordinances to put into the ports of northern Guinea for the purpose of buying quantities of maize to feed the slaves they were to bring home.

and kings of these lands; how the people worship their kings believing that they have descended from heaven; and of some of the ceremonies and customs of the kingdom of Benin on the death of the king.

To understand the negro traffic, one must know that over all the African coast facing west there are various countries and provinces, such as Guinea, the coast of Melegete, the kingdom of Benin, the kingdom of Manicōgo, six degrees from the equator and towards the south pole. There are many tribes and negro kings here, and also communities which are partly mohammedan and partly heathen. These are constantly making war among themselves. The kings are worshipped by their subjects, who believe that they come from heaven, and speak of them always with great reverence, at a distance and on bended knees. Great ceremony surrounds them, and many of these kings never allow themselves to be seen eating, so as not to destroy the belief of their subjects that they can live without food. They worship the sun, and believe that spirits are immortal, and that after death they go to the sun. Among others, there is in the kingdom of Benin an ancient custom, observed to the present day, that when the king dies, the people all assemble in a large field, in the centre of which is a very deep well, wider at the bottom than at the mouth. They cast the body of the dead king into this well, and all his friends and servants gather round, and those who are judged to have been most dear to and favoured by the king (this includes not a few, as all are anxious for the honour) voluntarily go down to keep him company. When they have done so, the people place a great stone over the mouth of the well, and remain by it day and night. On the second day, a few deputies remove the stone, and ask those below what they know, and if any of them have already gone to serve the king; and the reply is, No. On the third day, the same question is asked; and some-one then replies that so-and-so, mentioning a name, has been the first to go, and so-and-so the second. It is considered highly praiseworthy to be the first, and he is spoken of with the greatest admiration by all the people, and considered happy and blessed. After four or five

*How the
king is
buried,
and his
dearest
friends
with him.*

days all these unfortunate people die. When this is apparent to those above, since none reply to their questions, they inform their new king; who causes a great fire to be lit near the well, where numerous animals are roasted. These are given to the people to eat, and he with great ceremony is declared to be the true king, and takes the oath to govern well.

The Negroes of Guinea are unmethodical even in their way of eating; they live long; certain superstitions among some of the negroes in this country; melegete spices; the tailed pepper; certain bushes with stems that have the flavour of ginger; soap made with oil of palms and with ashes.

The negroes of Guinea and Benin are very haphazard in their habits of eating. They have no set times for meals, and eat and drink four or five times a day, drinking water, or a wine which they distil from palms. They have no hair except for a few bristly strands on top of the head, and none grows; and the rest of the bodies are completely hairless. They live for the best part of 100 years, and are always vigorous, except at certain times of the year when they become very weak, as if they had fever. They are then bled, and recover, having a great deal of blood in their system. Some of the negroes in this country are so superstitious that they worship the first object they see on the day of recovery. A kind of plant called melegete, very like the sorgum of Italia, but in flavour like pepper, grows on this coast. A kind of pepper also grows here, which is very strong, double the strength of the pepper of Calicut, and which because it has a small stem attached to it, is called by us Portoghesi *pimienta dal rabo*, that is, pepper with a tail. It is very like cubeb in shape, but has such a strong flavour that an ounce of it has the same effect as half a pound of common pepper; and as it is forbidden, there are heavy penalties for gathering it on this coast¹. There is, nevertheless, a secret trade in it, and as it is sold in Inghilterra [England] at double the price of common pepper, our king, feeling that it would ruin trade in the larger quantity [of common pepper] which is taken every year from Calicut, decided that

*Very
strong
pepper.*

¹ King Manuel forbade the trade in Benin pepper in 1506.

none should be allowed to trade in it. They also grow certain bushes with stems as long as beans, with seeds inside, which have no flavour; but the stem, when chewed, has a delicate ginger flavour. The negroes call them *unias*, and use them, together with the said pepper, when they eat fish, of which they are very fond. The soap made of ashes and palm oil, also forbidden by the said king, is very effective in whitening the hands, and so also is cloth made of flax, which is commonly used as soap.

*Unias,
that is,
spice from
pods.*

*Soap of
ashes and
palm oil.*

Why the fathers and mothers of these negroes send their own children to be sold, and what they take in exchange; and how these slaves are taken to the island of San Jacobo, where they are sold in couples, that is, the same number of males and females; the coast of Mina, and why the catholic king has built a castle there.

All the coast, as far as the kingdom of Manicongo, is divided into two parts, which are leased every four or five years to whoever makes the best offer, that is, to be able to go to contract in those lands and ports, and those in this business are called contractors, though among us they would be known as *appaltadori*, and their deputies, and no others may approach and land on this shore, or even buy or sell¹. Great caravans of negroes come here, bringing gold and slaves for sale. Some of the slaves have been captured in battle, others are sent by their parents, who think they are doing their children the best service in the world by sending them to be sold in this way to other lands where there is an abundance of provisions. They are brought as naked as they are born, both males and females, except for a sheepskin cloth; and they have glass rosaries of various colours, and articles made of glass, copper, brass, and cotton cloths of different colours, and other similar things used throughout Ethiopia. These contractors take the slaves to the island of San Jacobo, where they are bought by merchant captains from

¹ Tutta questa costa fino al regno di Manicongo è divisa in due parti, le quali si affitano ogni 4 o 5 anni a chi più offerisce, ciò è il poter andar a contrattare a quelle marine & porti & si chiamono quelli che togliano questo cario arrendadore, come saria appresso voi dir appaltadori, & altri che i loco commessi, non si possono accostar & dismontar sopra dette marine, ne vender ne comprar.

various countries and provinces, chiefly from the Spanish Indies. These give their merchandise in exchange and always wish to have the same number of male and female slaves, because otherwise they do not get good service from them. During the voyage, they separate the men from the women, putting the men below the deck and the women above, where they cannot see when the men are given food; because otherwise the women would do nothing but look at them. Regarding these negroes, our king has had a castle built on the said coast, at Mina, 6 degrees north of the equator, where none but his servants are allowed to live; and large numbers of negroes come to this place with grains of gold, which they have found in the river beds and sand¹, and bargain with these servants, taking various objects from them in exchange; principally glass necklaces or rosaries, and another kind made of a blue stone, not lapis lazuli, but another stone which our king causes to be brought from Manicôgo, where it is found. These rosaries are in the form of necklaces, and are called coral; and a quantity of gold is given in exchange for them, as they are greatly valued by all the negroes. They wear them round their necks as a charm against spirits, but some wear necklaces of glass, which are very similar, but which will not bear the heat of fire.

*Gold in
the rivers.*

*Coral,
blue
stones.*

The river called the Rio Grande, in old times called Nigir; a very high mountain called Sierra Liona.

In ancient times, more than 90 years ago, when this coast was discovered, the merchants and seamen approached by land from Ethiopia, along great rivers where innumerable tribes live, and these people used to bargain with them; but in our day our king has decreed that none except the contractors shall have the

¹ There is an interesting description of the gold trade at Mina in *A brief summe of geographie* [c. 1541] (ed. E. G. R. Taylor; Hakluyt Society, ser. II, vol. lxix; 1931), pp. 105–6: ‘Betwen this giaga [Gago] and the castle of the myne ther be goodlie serras wher thei gather moche golde and carie it to the castle of the myne and selle hit to the portugales in trucke of coper and clothes of colours. . . . To this castle the negros bryng the golde thathei gather within the lande as thei gather it without trieng [separating the dross], and selleth it for trucke of clothe of colour and rynges of latyn [brass], shelles and other tryfles to the factours that the king of portugal hathe there, for in none other placis thei do not bie it.’

Crocodiles. Sea horses, and what their teeth are used for.

benefit of this trade¹, and these discharge the duties about which I have written at length, so that you should be fully informed. But to return to the San Thomè voyage. After leaving the island of San Jacobo, we went south-east in the direction of the Rio Grande, 11 degrees north of Ethiopia. It is said that this is the river which the ancients called the Nigir, and that it is a branch of the Nilo, which runs westward. In this river crocodiles, sea horses, are found, whose teeth the negroes value highly even now, wearing them as rings in the belief that they will preserve them from various diseases. It rises on the same days as the Nilo, and sailing beyond this river by the coast, we see a very high mountain called Serra Liona, the top of which is always hidden by a dense cloud, which causes continual thunder and lightning. The noise from the summit of this mountain can be heard 40 or 50 miles out at sea. This cloud never disappears, even when the sun is strongest and passes perpendicularly above it. These ships of ours always remain in sight of the coast, but some distance from land, observing the position of the sun, and sailing south-east until they have covered 80 leagues. They are then 4 degrees north of the line of the equator. Here they at once turn east-south-east, keeping the coast of Ethiopia always on the left, until they reach the island of San Thomè, above which this line runs. If they do not then see the land, they have only to pass behind the line in order to do so. They will then have covered 460 leagues, from the first 4 degrees east, above mentioned, as far as this island.

How when the Rio Grande is reached, one begins to see four very bright stars in the form of a cross, which are called the Crusero, and how on the island of San Thomè there has been seen at night, after rain, an appearance like the Iris, such as the sun makes in the daytime.

In this part, which is between the tropic and the said line, they never have bad weather, because there are no storms as a

¹ The *Ordinances of King Manuel* required (bk. 5, ch. 112, clause 1) that no person was to trade with the 'parts, lands or seas of Guinee', without the licence and authority of the king, and imposed the penalty of death and confiscation of goods upon those who plundered the ships of the contractors.

rule in the tropics. In many parts of the coast of Ethiopia, for 20 miles round land, the sea is 50 fathoms deep; then, going farther away, where the sea is wide and deep, our Portuguese pilots have a log book, in which they note day by day the voyage and the distance covered, the winds, and the position of the sun. To reach the island, as we found ourselves, 4 degrees north of the equator, the following winds are useful, namely, Garbino [the south-west wind], Ostro [south wind], and Ponente [west wind]. As we reach the Rio dell Oro, mentioned above, which is directly under the tropic of cancer, we begin to see four stars of wonderful size and brilliance, in the form of a cross. They are 30 degrees distant from the south pole, and we called them *il crusero*. Under the said tropic, they appear to be very near, and by pointing an instrument called the *balestia* [Port. *balestilha*, cross-staff] at one of these stars, at the foot of the cross, to the south, we knew that we must be half way between the poles¹. When we are in the island of San Thomé, these stars appear to be much further away. A few years ago, a phenomenon, similar to that of the rainbow which the sun makes by day, was seen at night around the moon after rain; but the colours coming from the moon were like white mist. I must point out that after leaving the Strait of Gibralterra, north of the African coast, as far as the tropic of cancer, the tides are not very strong. On passing the tropic, one reaches the Rio Grande, which has also been called Nigir, which is 11 degrees north of the equator. A slight rise of the tide is apparent at the entrance to the river and is similar to that in Portogallo. But as the sun passes perpendicularly above, it rains so much in Ethiopia that the said river rises, and becomes turbid, at the same time as the Nilo; and the red and turbulent waters of this river flow as far as thirty miles into the sea. In the island of San Thomé, there are only two fathoms more tide than in Venetia.

*Stars of
the
Crusero.*

*Rainbow
made by
the moon.*

*The rise
and fall of
the sea
[i.e. tide].*

¹ By observing the height of the Southern Cross with the aid of the cross-staff, the Portuguese were able to determine latitudes in the southern hemisphere at night. The method was not very satisfactory, though Master John, the celebrated pilot who assisted Cabral, seems to have made use of it, while John de Lisboa, another famous Portuguese pilot, also attached importance to the method and even produced a *Regiment of the Southern Cross* [c. 1505].

Description of the island of San Thomè, nowadays inhabited by many traders; the island called il Principe, the island of Anobon, and the city called Pouoasan.

The island of San Thomè, which was discovered 80 or 90 years ago by the sea-captains of our king¹, and which was unknown to the ancients, is round. It is 60 Italian miles in diameter, that is, one degree²; and is situated under the line of the equator and half way between the north and south poles. The days and nights are of equal length, and one never sees the least difference, whether the sun is in cancer or capricorn. The Pole Star cannot be seen, but by turning a little one can see it; and the constellation called *il crusero* appears very far away. To the east of this island, 120 miles distant, there is a small island called Il Principe [O Principe]. This island is inhabited and cultivated at the present time, and the profits made from its sugar trade go to the king's eldest son; this is why it is called Il Principe. West-south-west, there is another island, which is uninhabited, called Anobon. It is very rocky, and there is much fishing; and the people of San Thomè often go there to fish. It is 40 leagues away, 2 degrees south of the line towards the south pole. There are innumerable crocodiles here, and poisonous snakes. When the island of San Thomè was discovered, it was covered by a great forest of tall, straight, very green trees of various kinds, reaching up to the sky. These trees have no fruit, and the branches do not, like those of our trees, grow sometimes sideways and sometimes straight upwards; all grow downwards towards the ground. During the last few years, great clearings have been made in this forest. A chief city called Pouoasan has been built, with a good port facing east-north-east. The houses are built of wooden planks. There is a bishop here³, and the present one

¹ This is one of the confusing passages in the narrative which make it so difficult to date it accurately. The island of São Thomé was discovered at the earliest in 1471, and less than 80 years afterwards—1550—Ramusio printed this description of the island. The anonymous pilot, responsible for it, was as vague in his chronology as many of his contemporaries.

² Portuguese pilots generally reckoned 70 Italian miles (or 17½ leagues) to one degree of latitude. Pacheco took 72, which was more accurate. Our pilot appears here to follow the rule of Ptolemy that there were 60 to one degree.

³ Internal evidence proving that this narrative was not written before 1535, the year in which São Thomé became the seat of the bishopric of Congo.

*Crocodiles and
poisonous snakes.*

comes from Villa di Conde by order of the archbishop at the desire of the king. A corregedor dispenses justice. There must be 600 to 700 families living here as well as many Portuguese, Castilian, French and Genoese merchants; and people of any nationality, who wish to settle here are welcome. They all have wives and children, and some of the children who are born there are as white as ours. It sometimes happens that, when the wife of a merchant dies, he takes a negress, and this is an accepted practice, as the negro population is both intelligent and rich; the children of such unions are brought up to our customs and way of dressing. Children born of these negresses are mischievous and difficult to manage, and are called *Mulati* [mulattoes].

Description of how the inhabitants of this island treat sugar; of the goods which the ships bring in exchange for sugar; of the fertility of the land and the way they cultivate sugar cane and trade it; of why the flesh of pigs in this land is so healthy and easy to digest.

The chief industry of the people is to make sugar, which they sell to the ships which come each year, bringing flour, Spanish wines, oil, cheese, and all kinds of leather for shoes, swords, glass vessels, rosaries, and shells, which in Italia are called *porcellette* [porcelains]—little white ones—which we call *buzios*, and which are used for money in Ethiopia¹. If the ships which bring these goods did not come, the white merchants would die, because they are not accustomed to negro food. All the population, therefore, buys negro slaves and their women from Guinea, Benin and Manicongo, and sets them to work on the land to grow and make sugar. There are rich men here, who have 150, 200 and even 300 negroes and negresses, who are obliged to work for their masters all the week, except on Saturdays, when they work on their own account. During their working days, they sow millet *zaburo*, of which we have spoken above, and yam roots, and many household herbs, lettuce, cabbage, radishes and bran seeds. When these are sown, they grow abundantly in a few days, but the seeds the plants produce can-

Porcellette.

Millet zaburo, yam roots.

¹ Cowrie shells, that is, small univalvular sea-shells, which passed as currency on the Guinea coast. The Italian word *porcellana*, a diminutive of *porco*, a pig, was given to these shells, because of their hog-backed shape.

*Of the
land of
San
Thomé.*

*Sugar
canes and
their hist
(sic).*

not be sown again. The earth is full of calamine and red in colour; it is very thick, like starchy chalk; and because of the heavy dew, which falls continuously every night, it does not crumble too much, but is like soft wax, and for this reason everything that is planted in it flourishes. Proof of the goodness of this land can be experienced, if the negroes stop cultivating a field for a short time. Trees immediately spring up, and grow as high in a few days as they would at home in many months. This growth has to be cut down and burnt; and in places where this has been done, it is a very good thing to plant sugar canes, which take 5 months to ripen. The canes which are planted in January are cut at the beginning of June. Those planted in February ripen at the beginning of July, and so every month they are cut and planted, and no harm at all is done to them by the sun passing perpendicularly in the months of March and September; because at these seasons there are continuous rains, and cloudy, overcast skies, which are very favourable to the growth of the canes. This island produces more than 150 thousand arrobes, one arrobe being equal to 31 lbs. gross of our weight. A tenth of this is rendered to our king, and this usually amounts to from twelve to fourteen thousand arrobes, and there are many who do not render the full percentage. There are about 60 factories, where there is running water, where they grind the canes and melt the sugar, throwing it into huge cauldrons. After it is boiled, they pour it into moulds, containing 15 to 20 lbs., and refine it by means of fire. In many parts of the island, where there is no water, the grinding is done by hand by negroes, or by means of horses. The stripped and ground canes are thrown to the pigs, of which there are an enormous number; and they, eating nothing but this sugar cane, grow tremendously fat and have such sweet and wholesome flesh that it is considered better than chicken meat, and for this reason is always given to the sick.

*Description of how the sugar in this island is not too hard or too dry,
and of how they dry it.*

Many experts have been brought here from the island of Madeira to make the sugar harder and whiter, but in spite of all

their care, this cannot be achieved. The cause is said to be, first, the great softness and richness of the soil, which makes the sugar soft, just as with us vines, grown in rich soil, have the flavour of it. The second reason for this is the humidity of the air in this island, which does not allow the sugar to dry well. Wherever the sun is, the atmosphere in this island is not, as with us in Villa di Condi, hot and dry, but hot and moist. This is always so, except in the months of June, July and August, when the winds blowing from Ethiopia are dry and fresh. Even these winds, however, are not enough to dry the sugar, and the plantation workers have therefore devised a means of drying it, which is as follows. They build a high shelter of boards, in the same way as we build the roof of a house, fixing them carefully together above and at the sides, with only a door and no windows. Inside this, they build a platform six feet high, made of planks placed a distance of four feet apart, and over this they place frames on which the baskets of sugar are collected. Logs of very dry wood are placed under this platform, which, when they burn, do not make flames or smoke, but smoulder like charcoal; and in this way they dry the sugar, as though in a stove. They then keep it under cover of wooden boards in places, where the damp air cannot enter, and sell it at once when the ships come, for if they have to keep it for two or three years, it would liquify.

Description of how the merchants, who come to live in this island, are urged by the factor of the king to buy as much land as they can cultivate, at cheap prices. How yam roots are the chief food of the Mori.

Only two-thirds of this island have been cleared of trees so far, and devoted to the cultivation of sugar. But as a number of merchants of Spagna and Portogallo, and people of other nationalities, are settling here, the factor of the king is empowered to let them buy land cheaply, as much of it as he thinks they will be able to cultivate. These people at once buy a number of negroes and negresses, and set them to work on the plantations, that is, clearing the land and planting sugar cane, after burning the trees which have been cut down. A master does not give his slaves anything whatever. They work

for him all the week, and only on Saturdays do they work to gain a living on their own account. Nor does a master trouble to give them clothes or food, or provide them with shelter, for they attend to all these things themselves. Apart from a scrap of cotton cloth, or palm fibre, with which they cover the indecent parts of their bodies, both men and women go naked. They eat the seeds which have been described above, which are like chick pea; grinding them into flour, and from this they make a kind of bread or bun by cooking it over the embers. The yam root is their staple diet. They drink water, or palm wine, of which there is an abundance, and sheep and goats' milk.

Description of how the Mori build their houses in the woods, where they have to live because of the sugar canes.

There are many big flies in this island, much larger and more troublesome than those we have at home, particularly near forests and where trees grow thickly, where it is necessary for those, who cultivate the sugar, to live, because they require the wood all the time for boiling it. The negroes, on account of these flies, build their houses in the following way. They set up four pieces of wood, the longest they can find, in a square, and make a roof over them of pieces of wood fastened together above and at the sides with a kind of grass like coarse straw. Then, by means of a ladder with many steps, which stands almost upright, they mount at night to sleep, carrying their children with them easily. In this way they appear to avoid the flies. In the city of Pouoasan, the flies do not annoy the inhabitants, because there are no woods near at hand. In certain years, *Small black ants.* tiny black ants appear in such quantities that they overrun and destroy everything they find, consuming all the sugar in the baskets, but when it rains apparently they disappear. The *sorzi* also do much damage.

Description of the batata or yam root, and of the various ways of planting it, and of knowing when it is ripe.

The roots, which the Spanish Indians call *batata*, are called *igname* [yams] by the negroes of San Thomè, who cultivate them as their principal food. They have a black skin on the out-

side, but inside they are white, and in shape they are like a large turnip but with many tubers. They have a chestnutty flavour, but are much more tender and better than chestnuts. They are eaten roasted in the embers, or else boiled, and are very sustaining, and as satisfying as bread. They have no particular quality, that is, they are neither hot nor cold, and are easy to digest, and therefore they are considered very wholesome. There are various kinds of these roots, yams *cicorero*, a large quantity of which is taken by the ships which come to San Thomé to obtain sugar. This kind remain fresh for many months, and will not spoil, if kept a whole year. There are three other kinds of yam, one from Benim, another from Manicongo, and a third yellow variety; but these do not keep so long. That from Benim is more delicate in flavour than any of the others mentioned above. The negroes plant it in great quantity, because the ships take such large amounts. The method of planting it is as follows. They scoop out these roots, leaving a little of the black skin over each one, and plant them where the ground has been hoed, that is, where the grass has been removed. Nearby, they place tall sticks or poles, for, as the yams grow, they twine around these sticks in the manner of hops. They have leaves like the citron leaf in colour and lustre, but smaller and softer. They take five months to grow, and the natives know when they are ready to be dug by looking at the sticks round which the yam leaves have twined. The leaves have become dry and dead, and if there were no sticks to mark the places where they were planted, they would not know how to find the yams, because of the dense grass which has grown up around the plants. Seeing the sticks, they dig round them, and find that one root has produced four or five large roots, and when they have dug these up, they make them into a heap, and leave them exposed to the sun and air for several days; then they are ripe and ready for use.

Description of a wonderful and very tall mountain, which is nearly in the centre of this island, and whose summit is very high.

Near the centre of this island, there is a very high mountain, many miles high, covered entirely with tall, very green trees, which is most steep and has so many dense parts and hollows

Cicorero.

Benim.
Mani-
congo.

and dangerous paths that it can only be climbed with the greatest difficulty¹. Around the top of this mountain, and among this dense mass of trees, there is always a kind of mist; and when the sun is above the line, or in the tropics, this mist is visible at all times of the day, and does not even disappear at night. It is not unlike the permanent snows, which are seen on the summits of very high mountains. This mist constantly condenses and forms water on the leaves and branches of the trees, and so abundant is this water that streams flow down from every side of the mountain, some large, some small, according to whether the water flows more freely to one side or to another. The negroes irrigate the sugar plantations with these streams. There are also many springs in this island, which are used for irrigation; and through the centre of the city of Pouoasan there runs a small stream of the clearest water, wide but shallow. This water is given to sick people, because it is extremely light and fresh, and the people believe firmly that, but for the goodness and excellence of the water of this stream, and of the other springs, the island could not be lived in.

Description of the trees, and of the usefulness of the palm, on which grow cocoa-nuts.

*Trees
which do
not bear
fruit.*

*Cocoa-
nut,
Indian
nut.*

Most of the trees on the island are wild, and do not bear fruit; and when they are cut down, the trunks are usually found to be hollow. The people believe that this is due to the great moisture in the island. Those who settle here from Spagna have brought with them olives, peaches and almonds, and the tress when planted grow tall and beautiful, but they do not bear fruit; and this happens to all trees which have stone fruits. Palm trees have been brought from the coast of Ethiopia, and they bear the fruit which is called cocoa-nut; which in Italia is called Indian nut. The kernel of this fruit, when it is fresh, is excellent to eat, and many things are done with the liquid in the nut to make it delicious to the palate. Making an opening in the palm tree, they place a gourd under it, and distil from it a clear, white liquid, which at first appears to be a delicate wine, but which soon becomes harsh and after several days turns sour. They

¹ The Pico de São Thomé (7,021 ft.).

have begun to plant the kind of grass, which in one year grows as tall as a tree, and which produces bunches of a fig-like fruit, which in Alessandria [Alexandria], in Egitto [Egypt], I have heard they call *muse*, and which in this island they call *abellana* *Muse.*
Abellana. [dates?].

The reason why the seasons in the island are different from ours, and which weather is most harmful to negroes, and which to white men.

The seasons in this island are very different from ours, since the sun passes directly overhead twice a year, in March and September. At these times, one can see proof of what the sun is always doing, that is, drawing up vapour to itself from the sea, and turning it into rain. Thus, when the sun is directly overhead, the air is always cloudy and heavy, and it rains hard, and when the sun is more distant, the days grow clearer and calmer, and for this reason the people look upon March and September as two winters, because of the rains and gloomy days. Certain months, in fact, they call 'months of the wind', and these are May, June, July and August, when the sun is in the northern signs, and when the south, south-east and south-west winds, which are peculiar to this island, are felt. They do not feel the north-east, north, and north-west winds, being sheltered by all that part of Africa. As I have already said, when the above-mentioned winds blow in these months, the negroes, living in this island, who go naked as a rule, feel the cold intensely, and this is very injurious to their health, and many of them fall ill and die. But, for the white people, who come from Spagna, and for their children, who have different constitutions from the negroes, this is the most temperate season of the year, and they thrive in it. There are certain months, which they call the hot months, that is, December, January and February, because at these times, the sun, being in the tropic of capricorn, it does not allow the winds, peculiar to the island, to blow, and since there is no wind, the heat is indescribable, because of the vapour, which one sees continually being drawn up. In this hot season, the negroes feel strong and in excellent spirits, and carry on all their work, and no season is more pleasant for them. But the

white people feel utterly weak and exhausted, and when they do not get fever, they have an affliction throughout their entire body, and can hardly walk. Many go without clothes, except for a single garment, and have to have a stick to support them. They have no appetite for food, and desire only to drink all the time. Because there is too much blood in their systems, many have themselves bled in the forehead or arm at this season. This bleeding is the special remedy for all the inhabitants of the island, black and white.

Customs in the city of Pouoasan in the hot season, and how the 'mal francese' exists in this island, and how they cure it.

In the city of Pouoasan, it is the custom, during the humid and windless season, which lasts for a few days, the heat then being so intense that they feel as if they were in a cauldron of boiling water, for four or five families to meet and eat together in one large room on the ground floor, with their women and children. Each family brings food, prepared at home, which is placed on a long table, and so feeble and ill do the people feel that they are more willing to eat food, brought by neighbours, than that prepared in their own home. So, by means of various devices, which they have thought out, they endure these few exhausting days. No one attempts to do any work outside the house, and the ground is so hot that they wear a double thickness of leather on the soles of their shoes, with thick socks inside. As a rule, the white inhabitants of Pouoasan suffer from an attack of fever every 8 or 10 days, becoming first hot, then cold, and this passes off in about two hours, more or less, according to the constitution of the person. This happens to all those who live here permanently, and they are bled three or four times a year. The first bout of fever, which attacks strangers who come here in ships, however, is extremely serious, and lasts for 20 days. They are bled without any account being taken of ounces, nearly a jugful of blood being taken from the vein of the arm. When they have been bled, they are given bread soaked in water, salt, and a little oil, and when the seventh day has passed, they wait until the fourteenth, and then, unless they have a relapse, they begin to recover and are given more food to

eat, including chicken; and when the fever passes, they are given pork. There is much *mal francese* [French sickness] in this country, and also the itch, but the negroes think nothing of this, and their women make a plaster, and also a beverage from certain roots, which cures it.

French sickness, and itch, and their cures.

At what season the negroes fall ill with fever, and their method of curing themselves.

At the season of which I have spoken, when the south wind blows, that is, in June, when it is cold, the negroes fall ill with fever, and on the day, when the fever begins, they place cupping glasses on the forehead and temples at once. They recover with this treatment, and sometimes they bleed themselves on the shoulder. They have a very light diet, a little bread with Spanish oil, and a few special herbs. No one remembers any plague occurring in this island, such as they have in the islands of Capouerde, where, so it is said, the plague was once so extreme that people's hearts were drowned in blood. The fluxes and fierce fevers afflict white men in the windless season, because of the large quantities of drink they take without eating anything. Few who live on the island pass the age of 50, and it is an extraordinary thing to see a white man with a white beard. But the negroes live for as long as 110 years, as the climate suits their constitutions. On five occasions, when ships have come to this island, beginning in 1520, I can vouch to having spoken to a negro called Giovan Menino, a very old man, who said he was one of the first to be brought from the African coast to this island, when it was first populated by our king's order. This negro was exceedingly rich, and had children, grand-children, and married great-grand-children without families. The people of this island are flea-ridden, and the negroes have lice; but the white people do not suffer from them, except for finding an occasional bed-bug in the beds where they sleep.

Why wheat, and vines, do not come to perfection in this island; the fruits that grow there; the birds, and various kinds of fish.

They have tried to sow wheat many times, and at different seasons, but it will not come to perfection; that is, it will not

Grain which all runs to leaf.

produce a full ear, but runs to leaf, and grows high without having any grain in the ear. Having sowed it in different months without producing grain, the inhabitants of the island, who have thought deeply about this, say that it is because of the richness of the soil that foliage and not grain is produced. The same happens to vines, which are grown in the houses in San Thomè, because it would be useless to try to cultivate them out of doors. In the courtyards of the houses, they make a kind of pergola, and produce grape stalks in such a way that some grapes ripen, some seem as if in their wild state, and others bear flowers. This they do twice a year, in January and February, and in August and September. Figs are produced twice a year at the said seasons, and are most delicious. Melons bear fruit once a year, in July and August, and pumpkins flourish at all seasons. There is a great quantity of large crabs throughout the island, like the sea-crab. Those from the mountains are better than those from the plain, but both kinds can be eaten. Of birds, there are partridges, mocking birds, starlings, blackbirds, green sparrows which sing, and innumerable mischievous parrots. Every sort of fish can be caught, but the *chieppe* above all, are delicious at certain seasons, in June and July. Between this island and the African coast, one sees such a quantity of whales, large and small, that it is a wonderful thing to speak of. This is how I have found this island, on the five occasions on which I have visited it with ships to carry sugar; and if your excellency is not satisfied with this confused and ill-composed information of mine, the fault is that I am a seaman, not accustomed to writing; and I salute you and kiss your hands.

Crabs.

Green sparrows.

Whales.

63. DESCRIPTION OF GUINEA, WRITTEN BY A FRENCH CAPTAIN. C. 1540¹.

Description of the coast of Guinea.

Guinea is the part of Africa contiguous to Barbaria, and begins at Capo Verde, which is situated nearly 5 degrees longitude

¹ Extract, translated, from 'Discorso d'un gran capitano di mare francese del luoco di Dieppa sopra le navigationi fatte alla terra nuova dell'Indie occidentali . . . Guinea, etc.'. This Discourse was first printed in Ramusio,

east and $14\frac{1}{2}$ degrees latitude north¹. It is the lower Ethiopia, where there are many kings and where many different languages are spoken. The people obey their king, like our people obey our king and our princes, and they are idolaters. Their clothes are of cotton, cut in different shapes, so that each one is different from the other. From Capo Verde to the river of Manicongo [R. Congo], there is no castle or fortress, except for one called the castello della Mina [São Jorge da Mina], where the King of Portogallo has 25 or 30 subjects to trade and exchange merchandise with the negroes, who come from inland. These negroes bring only gold, which they also take to the coast of Meleghette [Malagueta] and to the river [Congo] or to the Rio di Cesti², where there is made the greatest trade in the said Meleghetta. But above this river [Congo] on the side of the Portoghesi, there is no fort or other settlement, which is held for themselves rather than for the Francesi [French], and if they

Navigazioni e viaggi, vol. III (1556), pp. 423–32. Its author is unknown. There were a number of Dieppe captains, whose experience of navigation would have enabled them to produce it. A not unlikely suggestion, made by P. Gaffarel in his *Jean Ango* (1889), p. 36, is that it was the work of Jean Parmentier, the celebrated French captain who explored Guinea and Brazil between 1520 and 1526 and in 1529 made a voyage even to Sumatra. The full text of the *Discourse*, as preserved by Ramusio, does not disclose when it was written. But inherent evidence suggests a date somewhere between 1535 and 1545, and very probably 1539, for the author states that the Atlantic seaboard of North America 'was explored 15 years ago by Giovanni da Verrazzano'. Verrazano's expedition, of course, was undertaken in 1524.

¹ Actually $14^{\circ}33'N$. The author of the *Discourse* followed the Ptolemy tradition in reckoning longitude, basing his calculations upon a prime meridian passing through the Canary islands. He explains this in the introduction to his work: 'So that we can find out where lands are situated and measure distances more easily, it is necessary to know the longitude and the latitude of various regions. According to the cosmographers, longitude starts from the meridian of the Canarie island under the line of the equator, and goes towards the east. It goes straight round the world in a circle and comes back to the meridian point. This circuit is divided into 360 degrees and each of these degrees is equal to 17 leagues according to modern navigation, or $17\frac{1}{2}$ leagues according to the Portoghesi. This line, of course, is in the zone of the equator and concerns the longitude.'

² Rio dos Cestos, the name being derived from the Portuguese term *cesto*, a wicker basket. Pacheco (*Esmeraldo*, bk. 2, ch. 2) explains this: 'the name is due to the fact that the negroes of this country come to the ships to sell pepper (which is very good and very plentiful here) in baskets, which they do not do elsewhere on the coast where this pepper is sold'.

wish to carry from those places such merchandises as meleghetta [malagueta pepper], ivory, hides, or other goods, they must buy them from the people of the country, and they must pay *datti* [dues]¹ to the king and princes of the country. In this land, they barter one article for another, because the people have no money, and the lords of the land are very pleased when the Francesi go there².

The voyage which is made on the coast of Guinea.

From Capo Verde to the river Gambra [Gambia] the distance is 30 leagues, and the coast runs south-east, and the longitude is $8\frac{1}{2}$ degrees east and the latitude $3\frac{1}{2}$ degrees north³. From the river Gambra to Capo Rosso [Cape Roxo] the coast runs south for 30 leagues, and Capo Rosso lies in 10 degrees longitude and 12 degrees latitude. From Capo Rosso to the Rio Grande is 25 leagues, and the coast runs east. The Rio Grande lies in $11\frac{1}{2}$ degrees latitude. From the Rio Grande to Serra Liona, there are about 75 leagues. Serra Liona lies in 8 degrees latitude. From Serra Liona to the Rio di Ceste is 45 leagues, and from the Rio di Ceste to Capo delle Palme [Cape Palmas] is 43 leagues. Capo delle Palme lies in 18 degrees longitude and 3 degrees latitude⁴, and the coast runs east and west. From Capo delle Palme to Cape delle Tre Punte [Cape Three Points] is 113 leagues, and half the way the coast runs east and a quarter north-east, and the rest of the way east and a quarter south-east. Capo delle Tre Punte lies in 23 degrees longitude and 4 degrees latitude, and from this cape to the Rio Delgado is 150 leagues, and the coast runs north-east and east. This river is situated in 32 degrees

¹ It was an unwritten law on the Guinea coast that European traders had to give presents to local negro chiefs, before they were allowed to begin bartering. Barbot (*Description*, bk. 2, ch. 9) describes how the negroes, as soon as they left their canoes to come aboard the ships of the traders, always insisted upon receiving a present, called a 'dassy', or 'bizy', before they would exchange their goods for those of the Europeans.

² This reference to the welcome given to the French by the negroes is repeated in other contemporary French accounts of conditions on the coast of Guinea, and it must be attributed to national prejudice and envy of the Portuguese.

³ Apparently a mistake for $13\frac{1}{2}$ ° N.

⁴ Actually 4° 22' N.

longitude and 7 degrees latitude. From Rio Delgado to Capo Formoso is 67 leagues, the coast running east and west. Capo Formoso lies in 35 degrees longitude and 5½ degrees latitude. From Capo Formoso to the Rio Reale is 25 leagues, the coast running east. From the Rio Real to Fernando Polo [mainland opposite the island of Fernando Po] is 30 leagues, the coast running east. Fernando Polo lies in 40 degrees longitude and 5 degrees latitude. From Fernando Polo to Capo di Lope Gonzales [Cape Lopez] is 112 leagues. Lope Gózales lies in 1½ degrees south latitude and 35 degrees longitude, and the coast runs south. From Lope Gózales to Manicongo is 130 leagues, and the coast runs south-east and a quarter south. . . .

64. PLAN TO BUILD A FORT ON THE MALAGUETA COAST.
LUIS SARMIENTO TO FRANCISCO DE LOS COBOS. 6
OCTOBER 1540¹.

Most illustrious sir. . . . Two days later the king [John III of Portugal] summoned me and said . . . that he had fitted out a fleet here in this port of Lisboa to send to the coast of Malagueta, there to build a fort at a certain spot to prevent the Franceses [French] out there from putting in, to procure a spice called malagueta, which would be greatly to his hurt; the which fleet was ready to start, the ships carrying from here stone, lime and masons so that on their arrival the building could be commenced; and that he now gave order for this fleet to be increased with all speed, and that it will sail forthwith; and will comprise, he says, two big ships and five or six other ships well equipped, and five hundred men aboard; the which fleet, he says, will reach the aforesaid coast this winter, which there is summer; and that in March the said fleet has order to return to the islands of the Açores, where it is to await the ships which he expects next year from Yndia. . . . From Lisboa, on Wednesday night, 6 October 1540.

¹ H. P. Biggar, *Documents relating to Jacques Cartier and the sieur de Roberval* (1930), pp. 110–15. Extract. Luis Sarmiento y de Mendoza was Spanish ambassador to Portugal. Francisco de los Cobos was Chief Comendador of Leon.

65. THE SAME TO THE SAME. 24 NOVEMBER 1540¹.

... The fleet which the most serene king despatched to the coast of Malagueta left more than twenty-five days ago, a very fine fleet in which more than seven hundred men sailed, the captain bearing the orders, of which I have written to your excellency. It is known that immediately after they had sailed from hence, a great misfortune befell them, and indeed it is felt as a great misfortune here, for one ship among them went to the bottom, not one person being saved of all on board. The other ships separated and it is known that two put into Galizia, and of the rest nothing is known.... From Lisboa, 24 November 1540.

66. THE SAME TO THE CARDINAL OF TOLEDO. 2 JANUARY 1541².

I have already written that the fleet which the most serene king had despatched to the coast of Malagueta had met with so great misfortune that it had been broken up, and believing themselves to be lost, they had thrown overboard all that they carried; and the ships being separated, battered and broken in bits, put into Galizia, whence it is said that it will be difficult even to bring them back to Lisboa; and the most serene king has sent order to bring them to Lisboa as best they can. The king has felt this very much both because the fleet is destroyed, and because it is impossible to send another there from hence for nine months, on account of the winds which prevail, it is said, in those parts. It was a bad time for so good a fleet to be destroyed.... From Almerim, on 2 January 1541.

67. JORGE VAZ, CLERK OF THE FACTORY OF CABO VERDE, TO KING JOHN III. SANTIAGO. 10 JUNE 1542³.

Sir. In the month of November I wrote to your highness to say that there had arrived in this your city of Samtyago a round

¹ Biggar, pp. 143-4. Extract.

² Biggar, pp. 171-2. Extract. Juan Tavera was cardinal of Toledo.

³ Torre do Tombo, *Corpo chronologico*, pt. I, maço 72, no. 38. Translated. Printed for the first time. Abstract printed in Barcellos, *Subsidios*, I, 116-19.

ship, equipped in Sevylha by the officers of the emperor in the Casa da Comtratacam, to learn the latest news and to give warning that ships were being made ready in Framça in order to sail on the route of the ocean sea and to wait for the ships from the Amtylhas [Antilles], and the men of this ship had come via the islands of Canaria to this island to learn whether they had passed. From this island the said ship made its way direct to the Amtylhas to give warning there. It appeared that the French ships were not then ready, and for that reason or because of unfavourable weather they did not set sail until January. They made for the island of Foguo, fourteen leagues from this island, and there they seized one ship, which was on its way to Framdes with a cargo of cotton, and also another, which the contractors had sent from this factory to buy cotton for the trade, and they took from it in money and merchandise a sum exceeding one million reis. They carried the ships with them, and after plundering them, they left them behind. Having made these seizures, they set a course for this island; and before they reached this city, they came upon a ship behind the island, and they seized its cargo and plundered it and then grounded it upon the coast. When they came in sight of this city in order to ride in the port, they saw ten or twelve ships, and they did not attack, because they saw the ships, although the city would have been completely sacked on account of the poor defences offered by the land. Then, their ships set a course for Guyné, and between the islands and Guyné they came upon a ship, which had come from Sevylha to take slaves for the Antilhas, and they took it without doing any injury either to the crew or to the cargo, except that they took from it wines and biscuits in exchange for flour in casks of the same value, which they gave it, and they informed the crew of the ship of Castella that they were operating only against the Portuguese. And as soon as they reached Guyné, on the coast they took a ship belonging to the inhabitants of the island which was engaged in barter, and they robbed the crew and put them below the deck and nailed down the hatchways upon them, and by firing bombards at them they sent them to the bottom of the sea, where they perished, and only those of the crew escaped who happened to be on land,

and a shipmaster who escaped by swimming. Also they pursued six or seven other ships belonging to the inhabitants, which were engaged in barter, and with *sabras*¹ furnished with oars and artillery they forced them to enter into the Rio dos Barbacijs [R. Salum], and they remained in the entrance of the bar for fifteen days on the watch for when they sailed out. A ship of this trade, which had been equipped by this factory, was likewise captured, and they plundered it and slew the horses on board and sprang a leak in the ship, so that it would sink to the bottom. The crew of this ship all escaped, because, when they saw themselves surrounded by the ships, they abandoned ship and made for the land, whither the said Framceses had gone to buy hides in order to pay for malagueta for which they said they were going; and they said and reported that they intended to come to the said coast each year, and that they intended to kill and to plunder whomsoever they might meet and to avenge the death of a captain of a ship who had been captured on land in Porto Daser [Portudal]. This French captain, they said, had been taken to this island and here he had died. And according to the members of the crew of the Castilian ship, who had been taken prisoner, they say that the captain of the said fleet is a brother of the Frenchman who died in this island, for thus they made it known, and that according to what they learned the said captain happened to be a person of nobility and quality and showed great sorrow at the death of the said French captain, and so he is desirous of inflicting injury upon this island.

Item. At the time when the ships were captured in the island of Foguo, I wrote to your highness to tell you how needful it was that the coast should be guarded during the months of February, March, April and up to May², and that the contractors should be given authority to defend the coast, because otherwise Guiné would be lost, and there would be no trade, and neither the inhabitants nor even the contractors would equip ships, on account of the danger to their goods and lives, since indeed they dare not despatch ships from this factory.

¹ Port. *sabra*, a type of vessel used for fishing or privateering, and of 100 to 200 tons burden.

² The season when trade on the Guinea coast was most active.

Item. This city and its port have no defence save only one ship anchored before it, and they approached the land and they sacked it. I give this reminder to your highness, so that you may command that to be done which accords with your service and the welfare of the people, because on the days when those ships appeared here, a watch was kept upon this city and the ports of these islands and the people forsook the land, since they saw nothing in the way of defence or shelter. The port of this city is in need of artillery and munitions, so that as soon as they have news, ships may be equipped and they may prevent them from approaching the port and likewise from sailing the road of Guiné, when they have news.

Item. Furthermore, I wrote to your highness to report how Afonso de Tores had at the beginning of his contract misrepresented all the rent from the fifths and twentieths from the inhabitants, since all the ships which were equipped in his period and might have been equipped up to 1 March 1536 belonged to your highness, and how he had them in his claim on the same condition, and how he held them by the false premises which he intended to produce in regard to the contract and the conditions; and now he desired likewise to have them included in the claim. I opposed on behalf of your highness any proceedings in the affair between the present contractors and the said Afomso de Tores, and I opposed this because they belonged neither to Afomso de Tores nor to them but to your highness. Instead, I argued that, if a concession were made to the present contractors so that at the end of their contract their operations were left to run from January to January without the said charge, it would be very prejudicial to your highness to include such a condition, and that Afomso de Tores had put this forward, since he knew the conditions and the amount of this trade, whereby in this manner Afomso de Tores takes rent for seven years and not for six.

In Guyné there is a great famine on the coast even worse than last year, so that men perish. This island—God be praised—remains healthy and free from the sickness of the throat with a burning sensation which in days past used to prevail in this city. As soon as a house of invocation to the blessed Sam Bras

was built, and there used not to be one in this island, Our Lord God was thereby served, and He gave health to the land for the many holy graces and praises which are offered Him. It only remains to ask Our Lord God to prolong your life and give prosperity to your royal estate in His holy service. Amen. From this your city of Samtyaguo do Cabo Verde, on 10 June 1542.

Jorge Vaz

To our lord the king.

From Jorge Vaz, clerk of the factory of Cabo Verde.

68. JOÃO GOMES O SOURO TO KING JOHN III. ARGUIM (?).
8 JANUARY 1543¹.

Sir. I have written a letter to your highness in which I have informed your highness how the Castelhanos came from Canaria to raid this coast with three ships and began to trade; and how I found this castle so denuded of all things that I lacked the means to put them to rout. According to my information from the Mouros, they bought some thirty head of slaves; and one night in a storm a ship came to them on the coast and it was lost with all the goods it carried; and the crew were all saved except two men, who went on the mainland, where the Mouros captured them. One of them became a Mouro, and the other the Mouros brought here to me, and I am now sending him by this ship to the corregedor of the court to be tried.

I have news that they are going to return here up to the end of March. Your highness will direct me how to act in this matter. If they are allowed on this coast, there will be no trade left for this castle, for they would take everything, because they give the Mouros 20 dobras per slave and further they carry captives which they barter away in exchange for slaves.

I brought from Portugal by special order of your highness a Mouro, given to me by Francisco de Llemos, the interpreter, who told me that your highness had commanded this Mouro to go to Tumbiequatum [Timbuktu]. He left here and he was on

¹ Torre do Tombo, Corpo chronologico, pt. 3, maço 15, no. 87. Translated. Printed for the first time. I am indebted to Mr. J. T. Furley for drawing my attention to this document.

his way there for about four months, and he returned to say that he had been to Tuumbicatum (*sic*). But from a Mouro, who personally accompanied him, I learned that he had not been farther than the confines of Guiné. If your highness is told a different story, you may know that this is the truth; because I have learned from Mouros of the mainland, who had already been there, that the shortest period during which one can go from here to Tuumbucatum (*sic*) is ten months to one year; and he was on his way there for four months, as Amtonio Llopez, the clerk of this factory, can better explain to your highness.

At the present time, there is a good trade at this castle and I have 260 head of slaves. Your highness should command the officers of the Casa da Jmdia to provide this castle with necessary goods, because it is so badly stocked in all things, as I have told your highness above. May Our Lord God increase the royal estate of your highness and give you long life and good health. I kiss the hands of your highness. Made here, on 8 January 1543. By this ship I send 150 slaves, because more cannot go.

Jam Gomez O Souro

To our lord the king for his service.

69. ANTONIO CORREA DE SOUSA TO KING JOHN III.
SANTIAGO. 30 OCTOBER 1544¹.

Sir. On 16 October, a caravel of Framcezes arrived at this island of Samtyaguo, after two large ships of the said Framcezes had passed this way and had inflicted much damage upon this island and upon that of Foguo, by taking many ships and plundering them and sinking them. This said caravel of Framcezes came to put into the port of Praya, which is two leagues from this city, where it chased two ships until it drove them on the coast; and it arranged to stay in the said port, because this port lies on the route of all ships destined for these islands and also for Samtome [São Thomé] and Brasyll, which perforce

¹ Torre do Tombo, Corpo chronologico, pt. 1, maço 75, no. 85. Translated. Printed for the first time. Abstract printed in Barcellos, *Subsidios*, 1, 119-20.

happen to call at the said port, so that all are likely to be seized, unless that happens which I will now recount to your highness. A caravel from the Allguarve, loaded with merchandise, came into the said port, where the said French caravel was lying, and it was at once taken by the Framcezes, who put eight of their number in it among whom was their boatswain. Then men came to report this to me in this city, where I am serving as captain for your highness; and as soon as I learned what had happened, I went to a large ship, which was in the port of this city, loaded with a cargo of merchandise belonging to a certain Louremço Marquez, a native of the island of Madeyra, and I told him that I wanted to go in his said ship, which was furnished with artillery, against the said caravel of the Framcezes; and he replied to me that, if I would give him security for the ship together with the goods which he had in it, he would carry me in the said ship; and I provided him thus with security both for the goods and for the ship out of my own property for the service of your highness, as will be seen by that certificate, which I send your highness from here; and as soon as I had provided such security, I issued forth out of the port, taking a caravel in my company with an alderman of this city, whom I placed in it, and I went in search of the caravel of the said Framcezes, which thus had captured another caravel; and the next day in the morning I went to attack them, and the French caravel at once fled and I went in pursuit of it. The other caravel, which they were taking along captive, did not take the way of the French caravel, since it did not flee from me, and I ordered the said alderman, whom I was taking with me in the said caravel, to go to this caravel, which the Framcezes were thus taking along captive with eight of their men on board, and to take it back to this city. This he thus did, and he took it and brought it to this city with the said eight Framcezes. And I went in pursuit of their other caravel until we were twenty leagues from this island, where we fired bombards at them, and the fate befel them which your highness may order to be seen in the document about this, which I send you. After leaving the said caravel for the reasons to be seen in the document, I returned to this city, where I found the said eight Framcezes, whom thus I ordered to be taken. I await the

command of your highness as to what is to be done with them here in this prison where they are lodged.

With reference to Pero Monjz, whom your highness has as corregedor here, I have already written to you to tell you how prejudicial it was and is to the service of God and of your highness in this land, since I have made it known to you that a wolf in sheep's clothing cannot do more harm than he has done in this land, because his actions are so wicked that I am ashamed to write to your highness about them. If your highness does not put a stop to this and does not command punishment and exile, this man will be the cause of a greater disservice to Our Lord than ever before this; because, when he learned that your highness had commanded an investigation to be held there and an enquiry into his life, he determined to be revenged upon a few of those Old Christians, who are here, by seeking a refuge and disappearing, while he laughed at everyone, with six or seven thousand cruzados, which he had stolen from these people, and he was not content with merely this but he also did it to a man, whom three years ago he had imprisoned without cause, having refused to listen to any speech for his deliverance. What I say will be found to be true, when your highness sends here for an investigation¹.

Your highness may remember that I have lived with you for seventeen years, and that I have served you for seven in Jmdya and the rest I have spent in that court and in other parts where I have served your highness, and up to the present I have received no reward, because this captaincy, which I serve by command of your highness, belongs to my brother and he takes the rent. I have already spoken many times to your highness about a little artillery, because it is very necessary for your service here. If you think it in your interest, you can send it, because when it arrives here, the people of the land will prevent these Framcezes from coming here. At present, there is nothing more to recount to you from this your city, except that Gujn   is lost, on account of the many goods, which this multitude of New Christians carry there, whereby there and in this island

¹ An illuminating example of the corruption widely prevalent in the Portuguese colonial service.

everything is overrun with them, and the reason for this is that this corregedor extends such favours to them. Our Lord prolong the life and royal estate of your highness for many years. From this your city of Samtyago, today, on 30 October 1544.

Amtonio Corea de Sousa

To our lord the king.

From the captain of the city of Samtyaguo.

70. 'NEW GOLD MINES' SOME FIFTY LEAGUES FROM SÃO JORGE DA MINA. KING JOHN III TO THE COUNT OF CASTANHEIRA. 5 FEBRUARY 1551¹.

To my friend, the count of Castanheira. I the king send you greetings as one whom I dearly love. Lopo de Sousa², who was then captain of the city of São Jorge da Myna, wrote me a letter, which I send you herewith, in reply to those which I sent him about the new mines of gold, which he says are about fifty leagues from Myna; and according to what he writes, it seems to be a business to investigate, because the truth can be ascertained without much expense. You will see the letter from Lopo de Sousa and everything he says in it. If you think that it is in my interest to speak about the matter with some of my officers, or with any others from whom you can get more information, do so with the secrecy which you see the business requires. You shall write at once to tell me what you think ought now to be done in regard to it, and whether it would be in my interest to obtain more information from the captain and my officers who are at present in Myna; because, if you believe this ought to be done, letters can go in the ships which are now being made ready for Myna. Andre Soarez made this, in Almeirý, on 5 February 1551.

The king

To the count of Castanheira, about the new mines.

[On the reverse] By the king.

To dom Antonio d'Atayde, count of Castanheira, chancellor of the royal exchequer.

¹ Ford, p. 376. Translated.

² Possibly Diogo Lopes de Sousa, who was afterwards Portuguese ambassador in London, where in 1555 he protested vigorously against interloping English expeditions to Guinea.

71. THE TRADES OF GUINEA. THE SAME TO THE SAME. 27
FEBRUARY 1551¹.

To my friend, the count of Castanheira. I the king send you greetings as one whom I dearly love. I have seen the letter which you wrote to me on February 24, in reply to the one I sent you with reference to the slaves which go from the island of San Thome for the Antilhas, and the reasons which you give therein for the negotiating of the contract of the said island by my officers. On account of the substance of the discussions with you on this matter before your departure for Lixboa, and of the information about this business which you say you have gained since you were there, my will is that the said island of San Thome and its trade should be farmed out for some years by my officers. From now onwards, you can begin to see that such matters as concern the said trade are put in such order, so that all may thus be done upon the termination of the lease of Afonso de Tores. And with reference to the trade of Guyne, and the fourths and twentieths of the island of Cabo Verde, for which you say some bids have been made, one of which is of twenty-five thousand cruzados, at which amount you think the lease would not be a bad bargain, in the event of no higher bid being made for it, my will is that you shall let it for the said amount, even if more is not given for it. Accordingly, for the reasons which were considered respecting this business before your departure, I regard it as my interest that the said trade should be farmed out for some years, and also since it seems that the trade would be profitably leased at the said sum. You shall write to tell me when you think the first ships can depart for Mina, so that I may write to Diogo Soarez about the business of the new mines.

Adriam Lucio made this, in Almeirim, on 27 February 1551.

The king

Reply to the count of Castanheira.

[On the reverse] By the king.

To dom Amtonio d'Atayde, count of Castanheira, chancellor of the royal exchequer.

¹ Ford, pp. 382-3. Translated.

72. SIMÃO ROIZ, FACTOR IN SÃO JORGE DA MINA, TO QUEEN CATHERINE. SÃO JORGE DA MINA. 12 APRIL 1557¹.

Madam. I wrote to your highness last year by the ships in which Guaspar Anriquez went as captain-major, and I gave you an account of how I had two civet-cats, which I desired to send your highness by him; and I said that, because Afonso Gonçalez de Botafoguo, the superintendent, would not give me permission to do this, on account of those which he had sent your highness, I was not allowed to do so. I am now sending them by Adão Ferreira, who is clerk on board the ship on which Francisquo de Saa goes as captain. Also he is carrying besides a cage with a few birds with tails. I pray your highness to accept this tribute as from a poor man, who, if he desires anything, it is to be able to serve your highness better. With reference to the land, if our lord the king would send a fleet each year, so that he could defend it well against the corsairs, who come hither to it and do not allow trade to be pursued here, as they have done this year, much money could be made in this factory. But as this coast is not protected from the corsairs, no money can be made, owing to the low prices which they offer the negroes. May Our Lord prolong the life and royal estate of your highness for His holy service. From this fortress and city of São Jorge da Mina, on 12 April 1557.

Simão Roiz

From the factor of Mina.

To our lady the queen.

From Simão Roiz, the factor of Mina.

73. FRANCISCO PIRES TO QUEEN CATHERINE. SÃO JORGE DA MINA. 17 APRIL 1557².

Madam. I wrote to your highness by Guaspar Anrriques to tell you how this coast is overrun by corsairs, and to submit that

¹ Torre do Tombo, Corpo chronologico, pt. 1, maço 101, no. 18. Translated. Printed for the first time. I am indebted to Mr. J. T. Furley for drawing my attention to this document.

² Torre do Tombo, Corpo chronologico, pt. 1, maço 101, no. 23. Translated. Printed for the first time. I am indebted to Mr. J. T. Furley for drawing my attention to this document.

our lord the king should be pleased to command it to be protected. This year there were so many ships of the corsairs here that they glutted the whole coast with many goods of every kind, as Cristovão d'Oliveira will tell your highness. He sent two large ships of the corsairs to the bottom, whereby he did an honourable thing and one worthy of a considerable reward. May your highness reward him. The Casa de Caranão (?)¹ has been built, since Balltezar Rabello came in March, when it is already winter on this coast and the ships encounter difficulty here and boats are unable to put into the land. This should be done when our lord the king commands, and this may be from November up to the end of March, which is the summer on this coast. These ships carry to our lord the king some 53,500 cruzados, and your highness may well believe that, if it were not for the corsairs, double that amount would be available. I am not writing to our lord the king. Your highness will see the point of this, and you will not allow this harvest to be lost, because much produce will always be forthcoming, provided the coast is protected as I say. May Our Lord God increase the life and royal estate of your highness in His holy service. From this city and fortress of São Jorge da Myna, today, on 17 April

1557.

Francisco Pirez

From Francisco Pirez, the chief mayor of Mina.

Christouão de Oulueira sent two ships of the corsairs to the bottom on the coast of Mina.

To our lady the queen.

¹ Name of a ship? The meaning of the original passage is obscure: '*A casa de caranão se fez por balltezar Rabello vir em março que he ja jmverno nesta costa.*' An alternative rendering could be: 'The casa de caranão was made to come by Balltezar Rabello in March [etc.]'. Senhor A. J. Basto, of Lisbon, has suggested a third possibility: 'The casa de caranão is for Balltezar Rabello, who comes in March [etc.]'.

SECTION II

SOME EARLY CASTILIAN VOYAGES
TO WEST AFRICA

SECTION II

INTRODUCTION

THE orthodox historians of the exploration of the Guinea coast during the fifteenth century have always attributed it entirely to the Portuguese. Drawing upon Portuguese chronicles and contemporary documents in the Torre do Tombo, the Portuguese record office, they have effected a masterly and detailed reconstruction of that official account, which ambassadors and propagandists of the government of Portugal often reiterated during the second half of the sixteenth century in reply to French and English critics. This was that the Portuguese, by their own unaided efforts, had discovered Guinea and had undertaken at great cost the exploration of its coast and the conquest of its peoples. But if the reader will take a map and study the relative positions of Europe and Africa, he will observe that the ports of Europe nearest to West Africa are not merely those of Portugal, but all those which lie between the Straits of Gibraltar and Cape Finisterre. The ports of Spain's Atlantic seaboard, as well as those of Portugal, face the African Isles, Barbary, and the coast of Guinea. They also look out south-westwards across what the chroniclers of African exploration called the 'ocean sea'. Observing this, the enquiring reader may well ask how it came about that seamen from the ports of Palos, Huelva, Sanlucar, Puerto de Santa Maria and Cadiz are not recorded as having played any substantial part in the discovery of Guinea and the development of its early trade. Why was it that the Andalusians of these Spanish Atlantic ports appear to have been idle at the time when the Portuguese were exploring the shores of Africa beyond Cape Bojador, and why did they refrain from exploration, save for a few bold expeditions to the Canary islands, until the first great voyage of Columbus? In the circumstances, the reader may be pardoned, should he question

the honesty and impartiality of the Portuguese chroniclers, from whom he is obliged to draw most of his information about the discovery and conquest of Guinea, and should he wonder whether, after all, these writers have omitted events which might belittle the achievements of their own countrymen. In point of fact, his suspicions would not be unfounded, for there are records which prove that the Andalusians were active at this time in organising voyages to Guinea. These records have been collected, translated, and printed below in this section. They show that between 1453 and 1480 Andalusian seamen and traders sent many ships to the West African coast, and that the government of Castile claimed exclusive possession of Guinea. But they are too vague and too fragmentary to permit the deduction, not necessarily incorrect, that the Castilians contributed substantially to the work of exploring the coast of Guinea.

No less remarkable than the refusal of the orthodox historians to give due credit to the Andalusian voyages is the blind obstinacy of most seventeenth and eighteenth century writers on this subject. Faria y Sousa stood almost alone in recognising that the Andalusians had played some part in the opening up of West Africa. In his *History of Portugal*, which he completed in 1640, he described a voyage of thirty ships from Castile to Guinea, which he alleged had been made in 1481:

. . . the *Castilians*, contrary to the last articles of peace, sent a fleet to trade on the coast of *Guinea*. Our king sent a squadron, under the command of *George Correa*, to obstruct them. He met with 30 ships of *Castile* upon the coast called *Mina*, and after a sharp engagement, obtained a compleat victory, bringing several of them to *Lisbon*.¹

The majority of Faria y Sousa's contemporaries either negatived or ignored what he said, not troubling to examine original records. Jean Barbot, whose *Description*, published in 1732, forms the most comprehensive account of West Africa produced during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, dismissed such 'romantick relations' with ill-concealed scorn, arguing that

¹ Faria y Sousa, *The history of Portugal* (trans. by J. Stevens; 1698), p. 297.

they were groundless¹. He was utterly and absolutely wrong. His mistake was inexcusable, because even in his day at least one of the original sources, from which Faria y Sousa probably drew his more accurate information, was available in print². Wrong as it was, however, Barbot's view seems to have been generally accepted. One of the results was that at the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the second viscount of Santarem produced his scholarly monograph on the discovery of the West African coast³, his reference to a series of Castilian voyages to Guinea between 1475 and 1479⁴, was in a small way a revolutionary contribution to the study of the subject. Santarem's methods are now recognised as having been far more thorough than those of his predecessors. He was one of the pioneers of the modern scientific school of historians. More recent investigations have generally substantiated his argu-

¹ Barbot (*Description*, p. 162) writes as follows: 'Manuel de Faria y Sousa, in his history, pretends that, contrary to these articles of peace, the Castilians, in the year 1481, sent a fleet to trade on the coast of Guinea; whereupon, King Alphonso of Portugal sent a squadron to obstruct them, under the command of George Correa, who met with thirty ships of Castile on the coast of Mina, and after a sharp engagement, obtain'd a compleat victory, bringing several of them to Lisbon. But this seems to be a groundless narrative of that author's, according to the usual vanity of those people, no Spanish historian taking the least notice of any such action; besides, it appears that the crowns of Castile and Portugal were that year 1481 in perfect amity, and jointly fitting out all their maritime power against the Turks; and King Alphonso died before the end of that year; besides, Azam-buja's expedition, mention'd above that same year, contradicts this invention; so that there is not the least likelihood in that story. Nor do I find any more in what the same author says, that in the year 1478, the Castilians sent to the said coast a fleet of thirty-five sail, under the command of Peter de Cobides, who brought a great quantity of gold into Spain; such fleets were not at all usual in those days, and if any had been, other authors must have made mention of them; we will therefore add no more of such romantick relations, this being enough to give the reader a caution, not to be too hasty in giving credit to vain-glorious writers.' Nothing could be less appropriate, or more singularly unfortunate, than the concluding sentence in this passage. Barbot evidently knew nothing whatever of Palencia's *Chronicle of King Henry IV of Castile*, a work which at that time was still in MS.

² Damião de Goes's *Chronica do príncipe Dom João segundo do nome*, which contains an account of the expedition of Pedro de Cobides, was published in Lisbon in 1567 (doc. 98).

³ *Recherches sur la priorité de la découverte des pays situés sur la côte occidentale d'Afrique* (1842).

⁴ *Recherches*, pp. 198–201.

ments, and have especially confirmed his bold support of Faria y Sousa.

Santarem was concerned to demonstrate that King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, joint rulers of Spain, encouraged their subjects in Andalusia to sail to Guinea during the war of Castilian Succession (1475-80). In fact, Castilian enterprise in West Africa was not confined to a short five years, but embraced a period of nearly half a century. To see it in its true background, we must first remember that until the Columbine voyages, Castile was a bitter and envious rival to Portugal in the struggle for colonial supremacy. During most of the fifteenth century, the government and the people of Castile—and more specifically the maritime people of Andalusia—engaged as competitors in a race for Africa and African trade with the Portuguese. The race began in a struggle for possession of the Canary islands, whose geographical position was important because they afforded a base for more ambitious voyages across the 'ocean sea'. It was then continued down the coast of Barbary and across the fishing banks off that part of Africa. By the middle of the century, the competitors had reached Senegambia, and, twenty years later, they were fighting for the lead even along the shores of the gold-bearing region of Mina. The Andalusians were handicapped at the start by lack of enthusiastic leadership. This the Portuguese had in the person of the inspiring Prince Henry the Navigator, and it enabled them to push ahead everywhere except in the Canaries. But the Andalusians followed doggedly behind, and did not give up the race until their attention was diverted by Columbus westwards to America. Their first voyage to Guinea, of which any record remains, was undertaken during the winter of 1453-4, and from then until 1480 many voyages, some recorded and some doubtless unrecorded, were made, in spite of Portuguese opposition. In 1480, the government of Castile agreed to surrender its claim to Guinea in return for recognition by Portugal of its claim to the Canary islands. But this compromise proved satisfactory to neither, for while the Portuguese objected to the presence of their rivals in the Canaries, the latter considered that the division of territory unduly favoured the former. Each

watched every move by the other with suspicion, and there is every reason for supposing that the provisional demarcation of spheres would have broken down, had not the discovery of America in 1492 resulted in a complete change in the colonial policy of the government of Castile. The prospect of riches in America reduced the interest which the Andalusians had previously displayed in Guinea, and it was thereafter confined to negroes for the plantations in the New World.

THE FIRST KNOWN CASTILIAN VOYAGE, 1453-4. A letter addressed to King Affonso V of Portugal by King John II of Castile, on 10 April 1454, contains evidence of one of the earliest, though not necessarily the first, Castilian voyage to Guinea. John II wrote to demand compensation for robberies, which he alleged had been committed by the Portuguese upon his subjects. It appears from his protest that a fleet of caravels had sailed from Cadiz and Seville to Guinea during the previous winter to buy merchandise, probably slaves, and that, on the return voyage, when the ships were near Cadiz, one of them was captured by a Portuguese captain, named Palencio, and taken to Lisbon, where the crew was imprisoned and the ship and cargo confiscated. Moreover, in the year 1453, this same Palencio, together with another captain, Martim Correa, had attacked and plundered the Canary islands. The king's letter, as Bartolome de las Casas has preserved it (doc. 74), affords a striking illustration of the colonial rivalry, which already in 1454 distinguished the relations between Portugal and Castile. John II claimed both Guinea and the Canaries. He described West Africa as 'the land which is called Guinea, which is of our conquest', and the Canaries as 'our said islands of Canary'. But Affonso V, on his side, admitted neither claim.

There is nothing in the contents of the letter to assist the student to identify the part of Guinea visited by these sailors from Cadiz and Seville. Nor has any other document apparently survived to permit us to enlarge upon this expedition. By the time it was undertaken, the Portuguese had explored most of the coast as far south as Sierra Leone, but as this voyage was one of trade rather than of exploration, we may assume that its African destination was probably Senegambia. We cannot

assume, however, that it was the first expedition sent from Andalusia to Guinea. On the contrary, both the letter itself and the circumstances, in which it was written, indicate that other ships may have previously left southern Spain for Guinea in the wake of the Portuguese. This fleet of caravels, which sailed during the winter of 1453-4, was probably the last and largest of several, which, during the previous few years, had been directed to the lands beyond Cape Bojador, and by the time it had completed its outward voyage, the scale of Castilian enterprise on the coast of Guinea had become so considerable—interloping traffic, the Portuguese would have called it—that King Affonso V of Portugal decided it was high time to check it. So he ordered Captain Palencio to intercept the caravels on their return, and, at the same time, he sent to Pope Nicholas V to seek confirmation of his claim to overlordship in Guinea¹. Palencio managed to capture one of the Andalusian ships and he took his prize to Lisbon. The King of Castile responded by regarding the seizure as an unpardonable outrage. He held that he and his people had a prior right to Guinea. Accordingly, he called a meeting of his council, where it was decided 'not to allow the King of Portugal to make war either in Berberia [Barbary] or in Guinea' (doc. 75). He acted upon this policy by lodging the vigorous protest, already quoted, and by following this up with an embassy to the Portuguese court. After having collected evidence to prove that the conquest of the lands of Africa belonged to him, he sent ambassadors to Affonso V, who were instructed to demand that the Portuguese 'should not continue prejudicing the crown of Castile by appropriating its ancient and exclusive right of navigating in the seas of Guinea' (doc. 84), and to threaten war upon him, if he refused. But John II died soon afterwards, and his successor, King Henry IV, did not press the matter with the same vigour. Under their new ruler, who displayed very little interest in their African expeditions, the Andalusians dropped back in the race. If they still continued to fit out ships for Guinea, they have left little evidence of their activities, other than a few references here and there to an occasional interloper, seeking gold and selling arms

¹ Blake, pp. 22-3.

to the negroes (doc. 77), and to the development of a trade in orchella weed, a lichen from which a purple dye was obtained, between Seville and the Cape Verde islands (doc. 78). The Portuguese forged ahead. Delivered temporarily from the threat of armed intervention by the Andalusians, they were able to continue their exploration of the coast until Ruy de Sequeira had even reached Cape St. Catherine. It was not until the war of Castilian Succession that the Andalusians again seriously challenged them.

Before considering the resumption on a large scale of Andalusian enterprise in Guinea in 1475, however, we may observe one striking peculiarity in the accounts given by Spanish writers of the earlier phase. All these writers, and particularly Alonso de Palencia, express great indignation at the presumption of the Portuguese in seeking to expel the Andalusians from Guinea. They all make it quite clear that, in their respective views, their countrymen could advance a claim much superior to that of the Portuguese. All urge that Castile enjoyed an ancient and exclusive right of navigating to Guinea, a right which all the Portuguese chroniclers seem to have studiously and disdainfully ignored. The official thesis of Castile was set forth in a decree, issued by Queen Isabella, on 19 August 1475:

. . . the kings of glorious memory, my progenitors from whom I come, always enjoyed the right of the conquest of the parts of Africa and Guinea, and levied the fifth on all merchandise which was purchased in the said parts of Africa and Guinea, until our adversary of Portugal intruded by engaging, as he has, and is, engaged, in the said conquest, and he levied the fifth of the said merchandise by the consent which my brother, the lord king don Enrique—may he rest in glory—gave him for it (doc. 81).

Surely this claim must have been based on a substratum of fact? It is difficult to believe that such a thesis would have been so confidently advanced, unless it were founded upon the fact, well known to contemporaries, that Andalusian navigators had participated in the exploration of the Guinea coast. Yet, apart from the records already mentioned, there are no others. Castile can boast no Azurara, no careful chronicler of Castilian voyages down the coast of Guinea during the second quarter of the

fifteenth century. The expedition of 1453-4 affords us the first definite evidence of the part which the Andalusians may have played in the progress of discovery. Did some of them explore the coast between Cape Bojador and the Gambia? Did others approach the coast from the Canary islands? Is it not more than possible that Andalusian fishermen, casting their nets on the banks off Cape Bojador, may not have sometimes voyaged further south¹? Perhaps there are records, bearing on these interesting speculations, in the municipal archives of the ports of Andalusia, records whose full significance has so far escaped the notice of students intent only upon investigating the Columbine voyages. In the present state of evidence, when there is so much that is suggestive and so little that is definite, no sufficient answer can be given to any of these questions. But it is clear to the editor of this volume that the subject of Andalusian participation in the early voyages of West African exploration holds out infinite prospects for him who is prepared to comb and ransack the Spanish archives.

VOYAGES UNDERTAKEN DURING THE WAR OF CASTILIAN SUCCESSION, 1475-80. The interest, displayed by Castilians in West Africa, revived in 1474 and was continuously maintained until 1480. Most of the records, printed below, illustrate the events of this short period, for at no other time in her distinguished imperial history did Castile evince such a lively interest in West Africa, or so keen a desire to take and occupy Guinea. The vigour of her onslaught upon her rival during these six years may be largely attributed to the spread of exaggerated reports about Mina and the fortunes to be made in gold, to the spirited and imaginative leadership given by Queen Isabella, and to the outbreak of a succession war between herself and Portugal. In May 1475, King Affonso V of Portugal invaded Castile, intent upon enforcing his claim to the throne of Isabella, which he based upon his betrothal to Isabella's niece and rival, the

¹ Andalusian fishermen seem to have visited the fishing banks off the northwest coast of Africa regularly during the second half of the fifteenth century. Their expeditions were a constant source of friction between Castile and Portugal. Eustache de la Fosse records that the Spaniards were accustomed to go to the Rio do Ouro every year to fish (doc. 101). See also *Alguns documentos*, p. 126.

Princess Joanna. The Queen of Castile, supported by her husband, Ferdinand of Aragon, shrewdly turned the declaration of war to her own advantage by pressing her claim to Guinea. She encouraged her subjects to equip and prepare expeditions for Guinea; formally proclaimed her right to its conquest; forbade all and sundry to go to its territories except by virtue of licence received from herself or her representatives, even applying this prohibition to her own subjects; appointed officers to collect customs duties upon all goods imported from Guinea; early in 1476 conferred the captaincy of a fleet, which was to go to this region, upon Carlos de Valera, the son of the chronicler Diego; at the end of that year appointed an officer to supervise shipping destined for Guinea and Sierra Leone; organised a huge armada in the spring of 1478 with a view to sending it to Mina and excluding the Portuguese once and for all; and even approached Pope Sixtus IV to ask him to give his official sanction to this policy.

The effect of these measures was reflected all along the coast of western Andalusia. Ports, harbours and shipyards became very busy. Fishermen from Palos went out to catch negroes in Guinea as well as fish on the Barbary banks. Men came to Seville from far and near to engage in the Guinea trade. Prosperous merchants of Flanders, when they heard about all this from their Andalusian agents, instructed the latter to make enquiries about prospects, to assemble suitable cargoes, and to hire Castilian pilots, who were to take their caravels to Guinea in return for Flemish gold. Cargoes of Guinea negroes were unloaded in the ports by returning ships to be sold as slaves in the markets, the Sevillans upon one occasion staging a triumphal march of negroes through the city streets. The developing slave trade between Andalusia and Guinea, however, was uncontrolled. In spite of the strictest royal injunctions, indiscriminate raids on the Guinea coast were carried out by the greedy Andalusians, and behaviour, which twenty years earlier had disgraced the Portuguese, was now copied by their rivals. The tendency to disobey orders was very pronounced among the somewhat lawless mariners, and a raid upon Santiago island, originally planned by the government as an assault upon the

position of the Portuguese in Guinea, ended in a virtual mutiny and a dispute between the leaders about the spoils (docs. 83-91).

The more ambitious plan to expel the Portuguese from Mina totally failed. The chronicler Pulgar, it is true, records several profitable voyages, and it would seem that a considerable sum of gold must have been brought back to the ports of Andalusia during the war years, the profits being increased by the fact that Castilian merchants discovered that the negroes of Mina were willing to accept shells, such as could be obtained for next to nothing in the Canaries, in exchange for their gold dust (doc. 79). But there were losses as well as gains. Duarte Pacheco Pereira, for example, describes how one of the interlopers was wrecked on the Malagueta coast (doc. 80). A much heavier blow to the Andalusians was the entire defeat in 1478 of a large armada of theirs by the Portuguese, while it lay off the coast of Mina (docs. 93-8). There can be no doubt of the authenticity of this voyage, for it is recorded by contemporary Portuguese chroniclers, and equally there can be no doubt that the Andalusians must have suffered a very serious reverse, because even the patriotic Pulgar admits his countryman's defeat. Additional blows were delivered by the Portuguese upon their adversaries in the beginning of 1480, when two other Andalusian caravels were seized at Mina, although by this time the main struggle for superiority in Guinea had come to an end (doc. 101). The fact was that the Portuguese were too strong for the Andalusians. Just as the Castilians were able effectually to repulse their attacks upon the Canaries, so they were able successfully to resist all attempts of the Castilians to dislodge them from Mina and Malagueta. The result was that, when the war of succession came to an end, Castile gave up her claim to Guinea, and by the terms of the treaty of Alcaçovas (4 September 1479) King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella recognised that all land south of Cape Bojador was Portuguese. But King Affonso V, suspicious as ever lest others should still seek to share in the riches of the empire which he was building up for himself and his people south of the cape, determined to make assurances doubly sure by forceful measures against interlopers. In April 1480, he instructed his son, Prince John, to empower all his captains in

Guinea to cast the crews of all ships found south of the Canaries into the sea (doc. 104).

It must be admitted that records of these voyages are not very substantial. Much evidence has possibly been lost, and much probably still remains hidden. The known documents are fragmentary; the chronicles, especially those of Castile, are untrustworthy. The evidence, printed below, must accordingly be used with caution, discretion and critical skill. We may, nevertheless, argue that the scale of Andalusian operations in Guinea was greater than that of which we have indisputable proof. It is more than probable that the available material about these voyages reveals only a part of the true story, more particularly with reference to the sporadic raids of the men of Palos. Many of these raids were unofficial and sometimes contrary to official policy, for King Ferdinand 'absolutely forbade fraudulent trade with the men of Guinea' (doc. 84). This being so, preparations in the ports must have been as secret as possible; and it may be presumed that the mariners concerned, after a successful raid, took care to destroy all written records, for fear that their guilt should afterwards be disclosed. But rumour has a loose tongue, and mariners are notorious inebriates. Accounts of their clandestine expeditions, probably distorted and certainly incomplete, eventually reached the ears of the chroniclers Pulgar and Palencia, and they preserved them.

It is not proposed here to attempt an elaborate reconstruction of each of the voyages, undertaken by the Andalusians during the period 1474-80, for the documents will answer for themselves, and the reader, bearing in mind their limitations, may do this, if he wish, for himself. The critical reader will observe that of all the contemporaries, who described these voyages, Alonso de Palencia may be singled out as the writer who gives the most reliable and most detailed account. His *Chronicle of King Henry IV of Castile* long remained in MS., a fact which probably partly explains why historians of the discovery of the conquest of Guinea have so neglected the contribution of Castile. It was not until 1904 that Paz y Melia began to print an edition of the work, and the extracts, translated below, have been taken from this text of the chronicle. Palencia (1423-92?)

was born in Seville, travelled in Italy, on his return became royal historiographer, an office which he retained under Queen Isabella, whose court he frequented, and spent the last dozen years of his life in his native town composing his chronicle. He was thus an Andalusian, and he lived among the men, whose exploits he described. He claims, indeed, to have been one of the two officers appointed by King Ferdinand to see that the captured prince of Gambia was released and returned to his own country (doc. 84). His writings were not free from national prejudice, and he did not love the Portuguese. But he was an educated man, a fluent writer, and, within limits, a truthful one. He generally avoided fantastic exaggerations of the kind made, for example, by his countryman Pulgar, who went so far as to claim that some Andalusian fishermen, driven out of their usual course by a contrary wind, had by accident discovered the gold-bearing region of Mina (doc. 79). The relevant chapters in Palencia's chronicle may accordingly be accepted as a fairly true record of the achievements of the Andalusians in Guinea during the war of Castilian succession.

IMPORTANCE OF THESE VOYAGES WITH REFERENCE TO THE DISCOVERY OF THE NEW WORLD. The importance of these voyages lies not so much in the voyages themselves, or even in their contribution to our knowledge of contemporary conditions on the West African coast (which contribution is not great), as in the light which they shed upon the sequence of events leading up to the first voyage of Columbus. They make it abundantly clear that the Columbine voyage of 1492 was not the result of a sudden resolve, on the part of Ferdinand and Isabella, to take a hand in oversea exploration. Castile had already been engaged in discovery for more than fifty years, her sailors from Andalusia having been feeling their way cautiously, but steadily and persistently, in the wake of the Portuguese, south-westwards towards, and perhaps beyond, the African islands, and southwards beyond Cape Bojador. But she had found, after repeated efforts, that, save in the Canaries, she could not overcome the ruthless opposition of her rival, Portugal, whose rulers were determined at all costs to prevent others from sailing to the parts of her oversea empire in Guinea. Nevertheless, if during the colonial

struggle of the years 1454–80 the Spanish rulers had failed to secure recognition of their total claims, their subjects had gained experience of navigation and nautical affairs which was to prove of great value. There is evidence in the records and chronicles of Castilian operations in Guinea to show that the pilots and mariners of Palos, Cadiz, Sanlucar and Seville had accumulated much priceless information, which the Portuguese would have kept from them, and denied them, if they could. 'The men of Palos', writes Palencia, 'knew of old the Guinea sea' (doc. 91)¹. When in 1475 some Flemings resolved to make a voyage to Mina, they hired a Castilian captain to take charge of the expedition (doc. 80). Both Palencia and Pulgar give lists of details about the trade and navigation of Guinea, which are generally accurate, and which they must have obtained from informed and experienced Andalusian pilots. Eustache de la Fosse employed a Castilian pilot and equipped and prepared his expedition for Mina in Andalusia, thereby tacitly admitting the superior knowledge of the Andalusians over that of his own countrymen in matters relating to Guinea (doc. 101). The more ambitious expeditions of the Castilians—those to Mina as against those to northern Guinea—were undertaken during the winter months, a fact which indicates that the Andalusians were familiar with the phenomenon of the Guinea season. The special precautions, taken by the Portuguese, to preclude their Castilian rivals from taking part in voyages to Guinea demonstrate that they knew only too well the quarter from which danger to their empire was most likely to be expected. If this mounting sum of knowledge and nautical experience, thus gained by the Andalusians, failed to reward them in their efforts to create an empire around the African seas which schooled

¹ That this sentence was the result, not of any slip of the pen, but of important information, which had come to the ears of Palencia, seems to be proved by evidence, recently discovered, about the maritime activities of the pilots of Palos. One of these pilots, Pero Vasquez de la Frontera, took part in the discovery of islands, or mainland, far west of the Azores in 1452, and, afterwards, when Columbus was staying in the monastery of la Rabida, near Palos, furnished him with valuable information, encouraging him to go on his proposed voyage because he would find 'a very rich land'. See J. Cortesão, 'The pre-Columbian discovery of America' in *Geographical Journal*, LXXXIX (January 1937), 29–42.

them, its value was subsequently vindicated in the service of Columbus. We may confidently assert that many of the mariners, who assisted the Genoese explorer in his first great enterprise, must have been trained and disciplined in earlier voyages to Guinea. The route taken by Columbus as far as the Canaries was, of course, that taken by scores of Castilian sailors for years beforehand. It is not improbable that the westerly course, which he set beyond the Canaries, had been followed, accidentally or deliberately, part of the way, by his Andalusian predecessors. It is possible, moreover, that Martin Pinzon had served his apprenticeship in navigation by making voyages to Guinea, contrary to the wishes of the Portuguese. The same, however, cannot be said of Columbus. Most authorities are agreed that he probably visited Mina, but if he did, it must have been in a Portuguese rather than in a Castilian ship. His residence in Lisbon during the period 1474-85 places an insuperable obstacle in the way of our assuming what, on the face of things, might have seemed a likely possibility, namely, that he voyaged to Mina on a Castilian ship during the succession war.

The long struggle between the Portuguese and the Andalusians for empire in the African islands, Barbary and Guinea was virtually ended in 1480, when the way to Guinea was formally closed to Castile. But it was not forgotten. The Andalusians surrendered with an ill-grace, and until far into the sixteenth century interlopers from Spanish ports still continued to venture into the forbidden waters¹. Ferdinand and Isabella,

¹ There are many records of interloping Spanish voyages into Guinea during the period 1494-1558. Pacheco (*Colección*, xxxviii, 315-17, 344-6) prints two records, relating to a slaving expedition to Guinea, organised during the autumn of 1494 by Alonso de Morales of Cadiz, Fernando Manzano of Grand Canary, and Lorenzo Yanez Artero, a renegade Portuguese pilot. It would appear from a document, printed in *Alguns documentos* (p. 132) and dated from Lisbon on 27 February 1503, that just before 1503 some Castilian ships had sailed to Guinea and the island of Fernando Po, in contravention of the treaty of Toledo of 6 March 1480. Francisco d'Andrade, in his *Chronica do rey D. João III* (Lisbon; 1613), describes (pt. 4, ch. 37) how a merchant of Sanlúcar, named Antonio de Pesqueyra, sent a ship to Mina in 1547 and in March 1549 equipped another ship to make a similar voyage. King John III of Portugal was informed of these preparations and sent one, Vasco Lourenço, in pursuit of the interloper. Lourenço caught him at the

however, were fortunately gifted with vision and imagination, and, when Columbus approached the court of Castile with his proposals to discover 'new islands and mainland', the more adventurous spirits among the pilots of Palos were able to place at his disposal the full weight and advantage of knowledge and experience which they had gained in the Guinea navigation. The first Columbine voyage, seen from this angle, was not an isolated expedition, and in some ways not even a pioneer venture. It may rather be considered as an integral part of a wider movement of oversea exploration, initiated by the Andalusians, which had gathered momentum with each successive voyage down the coast of Guinea. The American voyage was the climax to their achievements in Guinea. When in 1480 their activities in the region south of Cape Bojador had been arrested by the Portuguese, they had directed their gaze, wisely and with fruitful consequences, from the Canary islands westward across the ocean sea. Accordingly, it may be asserted in conclusion that no estimate of the importance of these Andalusian voyages to Guinea from 1453 to 1480 would be adequate and complete, unless it took into account, not only their contribution to the discovery of Guinea and the development of its trade, but also that they formed a part of the true historical background to the discovery of America. If the opening of the route to India was the final result of Portuguese exploration in Guinea, the discovery of that to America was equally the direct outcome of Andalusian enterprise in Guinea.

Canaries and seized his ship, a procedure which for a time threatened the relations of Portugal and Castile, because the Canaries happened to belong to Castile and not to Portugal. Moreover, in December 1558, three ships were equipped in Seville to go to Guinea (*Torre do Tombo, gaveta 15, maço 18, no. 18*). It is of interest to note that Portuguese renegades assisted the Castilians in the voyages of 1494, 1549 and 1558.

DOCUMENTS

74. THE VOYAGE OF 1453-4. KING JOHN II OF CASTILE TO KING AFFONSO V OF PORTUGAL. VALLADOLID. 10 APRIL 1454¹.

... Moreover, most dear king and most beloved nephew, brother and friend, we inform you that certain caravels with certain of our subjects and naturals, inhabitants of our cities of Sevilla and Caliz [Cádiz], were coming with their merchandise from the land which is called Guinea, which is of our conquest; and, when they arrived approximately within one league of our city of Caliz, being within our lordship and jurisdiction, there came against them Palencio, your captain, with a balinger of a fleet², and by force of arms he seized one of the said caravels, with our vassals, subjects and naturals, who were coming in it, together with the merchandise and the goods, which they were bringing in it; and he conveyed all to your kingdoms. Likewise, you commanded our said vassals, subjects and naturals to be taken and held prisoner, and the said caravel was confiscated from them, and all which they were bringing in it; and, likewise by your command, a Genoves [Genoese] merchant, being a resident in the said city of Sevilla, who was coming in the said caravel in company with our said vassals, subjects and naturals, had his hands cut off. And moreover, in the year last past, 1453, Palencio and Martim Correa, and others of your vassals, subjects and naturals, went to our said Islas de Canaria, and, carrying arms, made war upon them. . . . For which reason, we ask

¹ Fray Bartolome de las Casas, *Historia de las Indias* (ed. Don Gonzalo de Reparaz; 1927), bk. I, ch. 18, pp. 104-5. Extract, translated. This letter was presumably included in the correspondence of the Columbus family, to which Las Casas had access. The *Historia* was completed in 1561, but it remained in manuscript until 1875.

² 'Valiner de armada.' This would be the same as the *barinel* used by the Portuguese. It was a kind of sloop, between 25 and 50 tons in burden, equipped with sails, and sometimes also propelled by oars, like a galley.

and require you to provide compensation, and to cause to be restored to our said subjects and naturals our said caravel together with all which was thus taken and stolen from them.

75. NEGOTIATIONS ABOUT CASTILIAN CLAIM TO GUINEA.
1454¹.

... When the year fifty-three had ended and the things already described had been done, in the beginning of the year fifty-four [1454], the king [John II of Castile] came to Avila, and from there he sent to summon Don Lope de Barrientos, bishop of Cuenca, and Fray Gonzalo de Illescas, prior of Guadalupe, by whose counsel he agreed to govern these kingdoms; and . . . it was likewise agreed not to allow the King of Portugal to make war either in Berberia or in Guinea. For this purpose, he sent his embassy to him, including Juan de Guzman, son of the chief comendador of Calatrava, Don Juan Ramirez de Guzman, and doctor Fernan Lopez de Burgos; by whom he sent to Affonso V to ask him to desist from the conquest of Berberia and Guinea, and causing him to be informed that this was his own. Before he sent thither, he had thorough intelligence of the conquest and definite information of how it pertained to himself; sending to warn him that, if he would not do this, it was certain that he would make war upon him with fire and blood as upon an enemy. The King of Portugal, after having listened to the embassy, was thereby stung to great anger, but, like a discrete man, he concealed it, and he replied to the king that assuredly he believed that conquest to be his own; and accordingly he asked him in a friendly fashion not to break the truce, which had been concluded between them, until he had ascertained whether it was true that that conquest pertained to him; and, when the truth was known, he believed, if the conquest were his, that the King of Castile would not wish to dis-

¹ *Crónica del serenísimo principe Don Juan, segundo rey deste nombre (Biblioteca de autores españoles*, vol. 68; Madrid; 1923), p. 692. Extract, translated. This anonymous chronicle was first published by Doctor Lorenzo Galíndez de Carvajal in 1517, but he appears to have been its editor rather than its author.

turb it. This reply came to the king at the time when he left Escalona, and [because]¹ he was indisposed, and because from Avila, where he stayed several days, he went to Medina, where he remained until the sixth day of June of this said year, and still the infirmity steadily grew worse, therefore all the business of the king was [not?]² regulated and governed by the said bishop of Cuenca and the said prior of Guadalupe.

76. ANOTHER ACCOUNT OF THESE NEGOTIATIONS³.

... King [John II of Castile], ... displayed in those few days, which preceded his death, diverse signs of his irritable disposition. One of them was at once to send as ambassadors to the King of Portugal D. Juan Ramirez de Guzmán ... and the licenciado of Burgos, so that, in union with D. Juan Iñiguez, previously sent to the monarch cited, and his uncle D. Enrique [Prince Henry the Navigator] of Portugal, they might demand the fulfilment of the agreements concluded between the kings of Castile and Portugal to end the wars, which they waged, agreements which had been shamelessly violated by the latter in appropriating only for himself and his subjects the power of making war on the Marroquies and on all other Arabes or Etiopes, who inhabited the African coasts of the Mediterraneo and the Oceano, as if such a prerogative pertained only to the Portuguese; thus it is that the most ancients rights had entrusted exclusively to the kings of Castile an enterprise of such magnitude, conceding to them the possession of las islas Afortunadas [Fortunate islands] or Canarias, which the King of Portugal had ventured to dispute, skilfully transgressing the limits of the alliance. For all these reasons, warning was to be given that the excesses of such a war, which had caused grave disasters by sea to the Castilians, must be abandoned, or reparation should instantly be made, if it was desired to observe the alliance agreed upon by the fathers of both princes; or, on the contrary, war would be declared....

¹ 'Como', or a similar word, appears to be wanted in the text.

² Text corrupt. The word 'no' seems to be redundant.

³ Palencia, dec. 1, bk. 2, ch. x. Extract, translated.

77. A CASTILIAN INTERLOPER IN GUINEA. c. 1460¹.

... While we were [at Zaya, just south of Cape Verde], there came a caravel from Gambia, which brought us information that a certain man, named De Prado, was coming with a very richly laden caravel, whereupon I [Diogo Gomes] immediately fitted out the caravel of Gonçalo Ferreira, and ordered him in the king's name, on pain of death, and confiscation of all his goods, to go to Cape Verde, and to look out for that caravel, which he did, and took it, and we found great booty in it. I forthwith despatched the captain, together with Gonçalo Ferreira, to the king, and wrote to the king an account of all these events.

I and Antonio da Noli then left that port of Zaya, and sailed two days and one night towards Portugal. . . . And I with extreme labour made my way to Lisbon, and after some time the king went to Oporto, where that De Prado, who had carried arms to the Moors, and whom Gonçalo Ferreira had taken prisoner, lay in irons, and the king ordered that they should martyrise him in a cart, and that they should make a furnace of fire, and throw him into it with his sword and gold.

78. TRADE BETWEEN SEVILLE AND SANTIAGO ISLAND. DECREE OF KING AFFONSO V OF PORTUGAL. SANTAREM. 30 SEPTEMBER 1469².

D. Affonso [etc.] To as many as shall see this letter, we make known that the infante D. Fernando, my most dear and beloved brother, wrote to us to tell us how he had made a contract for the *ursella* [orchella] from his islands of Cabo Verde with João de Lugo and Pedro de Lugo, Castilian merchants and inhabitants in the city of Sevilha, on condition that they carry the said *ursella* in ships of Castile, since it would be more profitable for them to have to load it therein, and that, on account of certain

¹ Diogo Gomes, *De prima inventione Guineae*, printed in Crone's edition of the *Voyages of Cadamosto*, pp. 101-2. Extract. R. H. Major's translation. It is not absolutely certain that De Prado was a Castilian interloper, but it is highly probable. On this point, see Blake, pp. 23-4.

² Barcellos, *Subsidios*, I, 33-4. Translated.

injuries and damages, which certain of the people of the kingdoms of Castile have inflicted, or hereafter may inflict, upon our naturals¹, they are afraid lest some restraint or reprisal be directed against their persons and in this way even against the ships, which are occupied in the said contract of *ursella*, and against their goods and crews, and that, forasmuch as they wish, besides this, to trade in our kingdoms, he has petitioned us as a favour to give him for this purpose our safe conduct; and we, having seen that which my said brother thus wrote to us and sent to ask us for, and wishing to show kindness and favour to him, are pleased to grant royal security to the said João de Lugo and Pedro de Lugo and to all their merchandise, ships and crews, so that they may go and be in the said contract with clerks of my said brother, and likewise that any ships and crews whatsoever, who bring their own merchandise to our kingdoms and carry from these kingdoms to foreign parts, may be able to go and come and be present in our ports, rivers, waters and anchorages in security without themselves or their said merchandise, ships and crews suffering any reprisal, restraint or embargo, because of the deaths, evil robberies and injuries, which those men of Andalusia or of other parts of the kingdom of Castile have inflicted, or may hereafter inflict, upon our subjects, since the said João de Lugo and Pedro de Lugo and their ships and crews are not guilty of these; furthermore, we secure him, Diogo de Sevilha, his factor, and all his other factors; and, furthermore, we command all our chief magistrates and judges and law officers and any other officials and persons whatsoever, to whom the cognisance of this pertains and this letter of security shall be shown, and all captains and masters and mariners of the ships of our kingdoms that, according as is said, they shall not take, or make, or allow to be made, any reprisal, embargo or restraint, according as is said, against the said João de Lugo and Pedro de Lugo, or against their merchandise and factors, or against the said Diogo de Sevilha and the ships and crews, as long as the said contract of *ursella*, which they have

¹ This appears to be a reference to the plundering of Santiago island by Andalusian raiders, but there is no confirmatory evidence in other documents.

made with my said brother, is valid, and they shall allow them to carry from our kingdoms as much and any merchandise whatsoever as it profits them to foreign parts, provided these are not among goods prohibited by us, and provided they pay you in full our accustomed rights and duties, as they must under our articles and declarations, without any embargo other than that which may be imposed on this account. Such is our pleasure, and we likewise charge all captains, masters and mariners of foreign ships that they be pleased to observe this, in so far as it is our wish, and we shall welcome it from them as a singular service for which we shall be extremely thankful. Given in Santarem, on 30 September 1469. Antão Gonsalves made this. This *ursella* they shall thus carry in the said ships to our kingdoms, or to those of Castile, according to the conditions of their contract and not otherwise.

79. A CASTILIAN ACCOUNT OF THE DISCOVERY OF MINA.
c. 1474¹.

In those times in the parts of the West very far from the land of Spain, perhaps in number a thousand leagues by sea, they found some lands of a savage people, black men, who were naked and lived in huts. These black men owned great mines of very pure gold, and the discovery was made in this manner. A ship from a port of the people of Spain by its good fortune set a course by sea forwards towards those parts of the West, whither a contrary wind carried it, and it finished in that land. The crew of that ship, desiring to know where they were, received notice of that people; who, when they saw the men from the ship, came to them naked and with many pieces of gold in their hands to exchange them for old clothes and for other things of little value, which the crew carried in the ship. The crew of that ship exchanged their old pieces of cloth and the other things

¹ Hernando del Pulgar, *Crónica de los señores reyes católicos Don Fernando y Doña Isabel* (*Biblioteca de autores españoles*, vol. 70; 1923), pt. 2, ch. 62. Extract, translated. Pulgar was secretary to King Henry IV of Castile, and in 1482 Queen Isabella appointed him national historiographer. He died c. 1492. The part of his chronicle which relates to the period before 1482 is grossly inaccurate.

from their ship, which they could do without, for the pieces of gold which those savages gave them. And a great sum of gold having been secured in this manner, they returned to Spain, and they made known especially in those ports of Andalucia this which they had found, and they tested the gold, which they had brought, and they found it to be pure. This having become known, some persons of those ports equipped a caravel and themselves ventured to go on that voyage. These men likewise came back with much gold, which they had exchanged for old clothes and for old brass and for copper. The report of this was spread so widely through those ports of Andalucia that all were keen to go to that land; and it happened that from one voyage ten thousand pesos of gold were derived, each peso whereof was worth two florins of Aragon, and, above all, he who carried out very great shells of the sea demanded twenty or thirty pesos of that gold for each shell; and all who were able to secure them embarked a quantity of those shells; these shells were obtained in the ports of the islands of Canaria, and one shell, which used to be regarded as useless, came for that reason in the city of Sevilla and in those ports of Andalucia to be worth twenty reals of plate, on account of the great demand which existed for them in order to carry them to that land.

This having been known by the king and queen, and seeing the profit which was to be had in that business, they took a hand therein; and they commanded that no one was to go to those parts without their licence, so that they might receive the fifth part of that obtained there, which pertained to them, as to the lords of the land. A great customs revenue accrued from this source to their exchequer. The people who went to those parts selected small ships and caravels, because there were certain inlets through which they had to enter into that land. What they carried, and the peoples of those parts demanded, were old and threadbare clothes, which they lacked, and copper mortars, brass candlesticks, and brass manillas; and, above all, they carried a quantity of those shells, which were in much demand there. It was said that they were precious, because in those districts many thunderbolts fell from the sky, and those savages believed that any man whatever, who carried one of those shells,

was protected from the thunderbolts. The time which it took a ship to go to those parts was two or three months, for they always went straight down there, and on the return journey they took seven or eight months¹. And when they arrived in those parts and entered into the inlets, soon those savage peoples would come to them, each one with the gold which he had, and would exchange it for the things which they carried. Many of those who went were in great peril on the way, because the land is very warm, and, because of the heat, they drank much water and they ate the fruit of those islands, which they found on the way; but he, who escaped, became rich. All those, who came from those parts and engaged in that traffic, said that, whenever some ships arrived in that land, the peoples of the land would soon call with their voices one to another, because they lived in the fields, and all would repair to those ports to exchange their gold. This traffic, since it was extremely profitable, was worked by so many ships from Castile and Portugal, which went to that land with the things we have described, that those savages grew more experienced, and raised the price of that gold of theirs, and now they did not give it with such great liberality as they gave it to the first comers; but those, who went there, always made a great profit. We do not know whether this land, from whence the gold was carried, was the land of Társis [Tarshish], or the land of Ofir [Ophir], which is mentioned in the Holy Scripture in the third book of Kings², a land from whence they brought gold to King Salomon for the work of the temple that he built.

80. A FLEMISH-CASTILIAN VOYAGE TO MINA. 1475³.

... Four leagues along the coast beyond the Rio de S. Vincente [Grand Butu Point] is the Praya dos Escravos, which

¹ Pulgar's claim that his countrymen discovered Mina may be regarded as propaganda by the official chronicler in support of the Castilian claim to West Africa. But references, such as this, show that he was in possession of authentic information about the Guinea navigation, drawn presumably from Andalusians who had sailed to Mina. The return voyage from Mina took longer than the out voyage, because of adverse currents and winds. His description of the goods traded on the Mina coast is also correct. So is his statement that some of the negroes used shells as fetishes.

² 1 Kings, 22.

³ *Esmeraldo* (Kimble's translation), bk. 2, ch. 3. Extract.

extends for two leagues or more; its name is derived from the fact that certain slaves were obtained by barter here when this land was discovered, but now it is a place of little barter, because on the coast before and after it more pepper and slaves are found than on this part of the shore itself. In the year of Our Lord 1475, a ship was fitted out by Flemings in Flanders, with a Castilian captain, who dared to sail with their merchandise to Mina seven or eight years before the castle of S. Jorge was built. They obtained five or six thousand doubloons, but as they did not fear the heavy excommunications of the holy fathers, who granted to the kings of Portugal that none of any other race than the Portuguese with the permission of the kings of Portugal should sail thither, and as they did not fear the prohibitions of the Holy Mother Church, God gave them a bad end; for on their return from Mina, when they were opposite this Praya dos Escravos, as the wind was then calm and in the west, they anchored in twenty-five fathoms; but as the bottom all along this coast is full of rock, it cut right through their hawser during the night, and a wind blowing up from the sea drove their ship on the beach, where it was wrecked. The negroes then ate the thirty-five Flemings, who formed the crew. We learnt this from the negroes themselves and from Pedro Gonçalves Neto, who in the following year went there as captain of a ship and obtained in barter nearly all the gold, which the Flemings had with them, and some of their clothes.

81. APPOINTMENT OF RECEIVERS OF THE CUSTOMS OF GUINEA AT SEVILLE. VALLADOLID. 19 AUGUST 1475¹.

Dona Isabel [*etc.*] To the prelates, dukes, counts, marquises, grandees, masters of the Orders, priors, commanders and deputy commanders, governors of castles, and of fortified, unfortified, and portalled, houses, and members of my council, judges of my audiencia and justices of the peace, notaries, other justices, and officers whatsoever of my household, court and chancery, and to councils, justices, aldermen, knights, esquires,

¹ J. F. Pacheco, *Colección de documentos inéditos*, XXXVIII (1882), 31-6.
Translated.

officers and homes-buenos, and to all towns and houses whatsoever of my kingdoms and lordships, and of the seaports thereof, and to any others whatsoever my vassals, subjects and naturals, of whatsoever estate, preeminence, dignity and condition they may be, and to each and all of you whatsoever, to whom this letter shall be shown, or a copy thereof, signed by a public notary, greetings and thanks. You know well, or you should know, that the kings of glorious memory, my progenitors from whom I come, always enjoyed the right of the conquest of the parts of Africa and Guinea, and levied the fifth on all merchandise which was purchased in the said parts of Africa and Guinea, until our adversary of Portugal intruded by engaging, as he has, and is, engaged, in the said conquest, and he levied the fifth of the said merchandise by the consent which my brother, the lord king don Enrique—may he rest in glory—gave him for it, which has been, and is, to the great damage and detriment of my said kingdoms and my revenue therefrom; and because I am engaged in attending to this and remedying this matter, and in taking and reducing the said conquest, and in appropriating it from the said adversary of Portugal, and in making, and causing to be made, war and every injury and damage, as an adversary, by as many ways and means as possible, and likewise in applying the said fifth to my revenue; and as a result of all this, on account of the great profit and advantage, which it is hoped will accrue therefrom to my kingdoms, and to the naturals thereof, therefore it is my will and pleasure to command receivers to be appointed in the most noble and most loyal city of Sevilla, and these shall be dr. Anton Rodriguez de Lillo, one of my council, and Gonzalo Coronado, inhabitant and alderman of la Ecija, my vassal, and such as are empowered to deputise for them; and in regard to the matter I commanded this my letter to be issued in the following form; by which I command each and all of you, who have and hold office on behalf of my receivers of the said fifth of the said merchandise which might be purchased from the parts of the said Africa and Guinea, the said Dr. Anton Rodriguez de Lillo and Gonzalo Coronado, and each of them, and such as are empowered to deputise for them, affixed with their names and signed by a public notary, that neither one nor

any of you the abovesaid may dare to go or send, or from this time forwards shall go or send, any person or persons with your ships to the said parts of Africa and Guinea, without the licence and special command of my said receivers aforesigned, who hold my power sufficient for the matter, under penalty of death and the loss of all the goods of each and every one of you, who does the contrary, to my exchequer and treasury; and from this time forwards by the same deed they are to be confiscated and applied to my said exchequer; and it is my desire and pleasure that this shall be enforced against persons and other things and goods which are taken by land. And furthermore I will and command that any persons whatsoever, who seize by sea any ship whatsoever and merchandise that may go and come to the said parts of Africa and Guinea without the licence of my said receivers, shall have and take for themselves the fourth of the said ships and the victuals and provisions and the third of the merchandise which may go and come in the said ships and in each one of them; and that the masters and captains of the said ships and of each one of them shall be made prisoner by those who thus seize the said ships, and shall be carried prisoner and in safe custody to the said city of Sevilla, and they are to be delivered to my said receivers so that they may hold them prisoner and in safe custody in the said city of Sevilla, and my said receivers shall fulfil and execute my pleasure against them; and that those, who thus seize such ships, shall not divide up any of the said merchandise and things, or take the said third as their part of what I thus grant them, until they have brought and delivered the whole to my said receivers in the presence of a public notary, and then they shall receive the whole part of what belongs to them of their said third. I command these my said receivers that they shall give and deliver to them their said third without any delay or excuse. And by this my said letter I command the justices of the peace, constables, members of the twenty-four, jurors, knights, esquires, officers and homes-buenos of the said city of Sevilla, and each of them, who now are, or from this time forwards shall be, in office, that on being required on behalf of my said receivers they shall give and cause to be given every favour and assistance, which the receivers may

seek and need from them with reference to what is contained in this my letter, and that neither on it nor on any part of it shall they impose or allow to be imposed an embargo or any other impediment, inasmuch as this is meet for my service and the universal good of my kingdoms; and likewise I command the said justices of the peace and other justices whatsoever of the said city of Sevilla as well as of each and all other cities and towns and houses of the said seaports, who shall be required by this my letter or by the said copy thereof, that they shall keep and fulfil it and cause it to be kept and fulfilled absolutely, according to its contents, and that they shall not allow any other or others to practise against what it says, or against anything which pertains or may pertain to it, except the said Dr. Anton Rodriguez and Gonzalo de Coronado, or their deputy, and that they shall cause this my letter to be publicly proclaimed in the squares and market-places and in other usual places of the said city and towns and houses and of each of them, so that it may come to the notice of all men, and thereby men may not be able to pretend or allege any ignorance that they did not know it or that it had not come to their notice; and neither you nor they shall in any manner practise to the contrary, under pain of my displeasure and loss of office and confiscation to my exchequer of the goods of those who practise to the contrary; and further I command him who produces this my letter to summon them under the said penalty to appear before me in my court, wherever I may be, within the first fifteen days following that on which he summons you; under which I command any public notary whatsoever, who is called for this purpose, forthwith to give him, who shows this letter, a testimony signed with his own hand, so that I may know that my command has been obeyed. Given in the noble town of Valladolid, on the nineteenth day of the month of August in the year of the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ one thousand four hundred and seventy-five.

I, the queen.

I, Alfonso Davila, secretary of our lady the queen, caused this to be written by her command.

82. ZÚÑIGA'S ACCOUNT OF THE APPOINTMENT OF CUSTOMS RECEIVERS. 1475¹.

. . . For years men from the ports of Andaluzia frequented the navigation to the coasts of Africa and Guinea, whence they were in the habit of bringing back negro slaves, of which there were a great number in this city [Seville], and for years considerable profits accrued to the royal exchequer from the fifths. But onwards from the last years of King D. Henrique, King D. Alonso of Portugal has intruded in this navigation, and all trade was carried on by the Portuguese, the men of Sevilla protesting; but they were not heard up to the moment when the war provided an occasion for the recovery of this right; and the king and queen from Valladolid, on August 15², sent a command to Sevilla, and to all these ports, that the Portuguese should be barred from that trade, and that ships should be equipped to navigate to it; their order was well received; and to be employed about their navigation and to set about the collection of their fifths, they appointed as deputies and receivers dr. Anton Rodriguez de Lillo, one of their council, and Goncalo de Coronado, inhabitant and alderman of Ezija [Ecija]. With this arrangement, a number of caravels very soon sailed, and that very profitable trade was re-established.

83. RAIDERS FROM PALOS SEIZE A NEGRO PRINCE IN GUINEA. QUEEN ISABELLA TO MOSÉN DIEGO DE VALERA. TORDESILLAS. 15 MAY 1476³.

Mosén Diego de Valera. I have been informed that certain inhabitants of that town of Puerto de Santa María and of the town

¹ Ortiz de Zúñiga, *Annales de Sevilla* (1677), pp. 373-4. Extract, translated. The value of these *Annals* is only secondary, for Diego Ortiz de Zúñiga (1633-80) wrote two centuries after the event. But he used contemporary chronicles and documents which he cites, and he spent a great part of his life in Seville, assembling material from public and private archives in preparation for his work, and so the *Annals* are generally reliable.

² The order for the appointment of receivers of the customs is dated August 19 (doc. 81). This order of August 15, to which Zúñiga refers, has not been found. It is possible that he misread the date in the manuscript in the Seville archives. Alternatively, it is possible that he knew of another document, ordering the exclusion of the Portuguese from Guinea, which has now been lost.

³ *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*, LXIV (1914), 367-8. Translated.

of Palos, to my disservice and contrary to the letters and commands, which were given and proclaimed by my lord, the king, and by me in the towns and places of the seacoast, went to the parts of Guinea with certain armed caravels, and it is said that they took one, who is called the king of Guinea¹, and certain other persons, relatives and dependants of the said king of Guinea; and because it is my will that the said king and the others, who were taken and seized with him, shall be given and delivered to dr. Anton Rodriguez de Lillo, one of my council, who by my command is resident in the most noble and loyal city of Sevilla; and according to the wish you have to serve me, I am certain that you will act in this matter. Therefore, I command and require you with the greatest possible diligence to proceed in such a manner that without delay the said king and the other prisoners, who are in that said town of Santa María del Puerto, shall be given and delivered to the said doctor; and if you really wish to serve me in this matter, it is necessary for you to devote all care and diligence, as is expected of you, and I will hold this as a signal service on your part. From Tordesillas on 15 May of the year 476 [1476]².

I the queen.

By command of the queen. Ferrand Núñez.

84. DESCRIPTION OF THE SAME RAID AND OF THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO IT³.

The ancient custom of the Portuguese in their navigation through the sea of Guinea. Designs of King Don Fernando against his enemies, intent only upon bringing riches from that region. Capture of the king of Gambia.

To refer to the last events of the reign of Don Juan II of Castile, considered by some as the father of Enrique IV and by

¹ The king of Gambia, according to Palencia (doc. 84).

² The date of this letter, taken together with Palencia's account of the raid, suggests that the Andalusians must have left Palos in the late autumn of 1475 and that their voyage to Guinea was undertaken during the winter of 1475-6.

³ Palencia, dec. III, bk. 25, ch. 4. Translated.

all as the father of Don Alfonso and Dona Isabel, I spoke briefly of how, after the death of Don Alvaro de Luna¹, the king wished to justify himself, and, as if he awakened from a dream, he determined, among other resolutions, to send ambassadors to Portugal to notify King Don Alfonso that he should not continue prejudicing the crown of Castile by appropriating its ancient and exclusive right of navigating in the seas of Guinea, and making war upon the Moors and other peoples of Africa, because that was the privilege of the kings of Castile and Leon. Only the abandon and the indolence of the Castilians had encouraged the Portuguese to wage war in Marruecos [Morocco], and to navigate like lords through the sea of Guinea, preventing with cruel wrath all other peoples from cruising off those coasts. The death of Don Juan caused the embassy to break up, and his successor, Don Enrique, as has been seen in that previously narrated, allowed the Portuguese more freedom for their incursions, stooping so low as to ask the King of Portugal that the subjects of Castile should not be molested, when they arrived in Guinea to trade with the natives, provided always that they paid to Don Alfonso the fifth of the profits. The insolence of the Portuguese rose so high that they were in the habit of putting to death some of the Castilians, whom they caught beyond the Canarias, with cruel torture, and in order to instil perpetual terror in the rest they used to maim others, cutting off their legs and hands. Soon in the height of their presumption, they attempted to take the Canarias, belonging to the crown of Castile by indisputable right, and four of them belonging by royal gift to private individuals. At all events, the ancient lordship and the original meaning of the documents thus prescribed it, and possession confirmed it. Spiritually, they are subordinate to the diocese of Seville in such a way that their bishop is a suffragan of the see of Seville. The Portuguese made as many as four different attempts to disturb our people in the possession of the islands, and very grave anarchy still lingers on, for three of them

¹ Alvaro de Luna was grandmaster of St. James and constable of Castile. He became the special favourite of John II, over whom he established an unrivalled ascendancy, and he became virtual ruler of the country. In 1453, however, he lost favour and was executed.

—the most important on account of the number of the natives and the richest on account of the fertility of their soil—do not profess the Christian religion, live given over to superstitious and cruel rites, and resist obedience to the precepts of Catholicism.

In order to set a bound to these insults and cruelties from the Portuguese, King Don Fernando sent a strong fleet of Andalucians with orders to break their arrogance, and to humble the pride, which the riches of Guinea had inspired in them. The Andalucians joyfully obeyed, and, while a fleet of thirty ships was being prepared in the port of Seville, some fishermen of Palos, already accustomed to warlike expeditions and fortunate against the Portuguese, joined with other mariners of Puerto [de Santa María], and arrived in two caravels at the coasts nearest to Guinea. They call that territory ‘that of the Azanegas [Azene-gues]’, by which name they distinguish those of citrine colour from others of a darker colour and of customs even darker. The condition of these natives, when they feed themselves on fish alone, is very gentle¹, and as they always walk unarmed by the lagoons, they suffer themselves to be seized without difficulty by warlike and unarmed men. The mariners of the two caravels secured 120 Azanegas and carried them to Andalucia, despising the orders of King Don Fernando, who absolutely forbade fraudulent trade with the men of Guinea, let alone the making captives of them, and commanded them to attach themselves to the royal fleet and to obey the admiral implicitly. The disturbances of the times emboldened the men of Palos to carry out this exploit², and, provoked moreover by the insolent words of Gonzalo de Estuñiga, governor of the fortress of Palos, they fitted out three other caravels and put into the coasts of Guinea with the intention of loading slaves.

¹ Cf. Fernandes, *Description*, pp. 52–4. Valentim Fernandes states that all the people who lived on the African coast from Arguim south as far as Guinea were called Azenegues, and that the Moors called them *Azenegues schirmeyros*, because of the fish which they caught and ate. They were called *schirmeyros* to distinguish them from the other Azenegues, who inhabited the interior lands and engaged in trade. The Azenegues *schirmeyros* were a people of very low condition and despised by the Moors.

² This slave raid was undertaken presumably early in 1475.

The king of that region, through his frequent traffic with the Portuguese, to whom he bartered his prisoners of war for trifles, believed that the ships were Portuguese. After signals of peace had been made by both sides, the king with some of his men entered into the first caravel and enquired who commanded it, and the reply in Portuguese confirmed him in his error. Then, he agreed to the barter of slaves for brass rings, small oval leather shields, clothes of diverse colours, and other objects, which the poverty of the inhabitants caused them to covet greatly. To celebrate the exchanges, the king caused one calf and sheep to be brought for the feast of that day, and he accepted for the following day the hospitality of the patron of the caravels. He appeared on the beach surrounded by a great multitude, and mounted to the ship with his brothers, his close friends, and the most powerful of his people. After the feast was ended, the patron invited him to visit the interior of the ship, and then the treacherous mariners closed the hatchways, and, having armed, they secured 140 nobles of splendid physique.

Once on the high seas, the king, complaining of the cruel trick, again enquired who owned the ships. They told him Spaniards. He wished to know whether they obeyed any king, and, when he was told that they obeyed a most noble one, he expressed his confidence that he would free him from such an iniquitous captivity.

On arrival at Palos, the Andalucians wished to force him to walk in the crowd amongst the other slaves. But he resisted, and said that they should take him either dragging by a rope or on horseback, because his misfortune must be either terrible or dignified. Gonzalo de Estuñiga, moved by this resolution verily of royal spirit, or perchance spurred on by anxiety about the future ransom, ordered a horse to be brought. The king nimbly mounted upon it, and, going before the slaves, he began to march with a majestic air.

When King Don Fernando learned all this, he commanded that the king be immediately restored to his native land. But as the execution of the order was deferred owing to the disturbances of those days, he ordered us, doctor Antonio Rodriguez

de Lillo and myself, to intimate to Gonzalo de Estuñiga that he must set the king at liberty. He managed to delay the execution of the order, and it was only at the end of some months of captivity that we succeeded in returning the unhappy monarch to his native land, although we were not able to prevent his brothers and other relatives from being sold in Andalucia as slaves.

That savage maintained a certain regal authority during his captivity, and he displayed dignity in his countenance, gravity in speech, prudence in conduct, and courage in adversity. On reaching his country, he exercised such cunning in order to avenge himself on his treacherous oppressors that, in spite of the distrust with which they travelled, he succeeded in securing some and keeping them as hostages for as many others of his relations.

85. RAID ON THE CAPE VERDE ISLANDS BY CARLOS DE VALERO. 1476¹.

... And a short time afterwards, the king and queen, our lords [Ferdinand and Isabella], decided to assemble a fleet of thirty caravels and three ships to send to Guinea, the captaincy-general whereof they gave to my son, Carlos de Valera, who held it for seven months. During this time, he contended for three islands of Guinea, subject to the King of Portugal, and he administered justice and delivered punishments in them for our lords, the king and queen. And he brought 300 negroes from there, and he took the captain, whom the King of Portugal had placed in them, a man called Antonio de Noli²; and he sent

¹ Mosén Diego de Valera, *Crónica de los reyes católicos* (ed. Juan de M. Carriazo; 1927), ch. 22, p. 82. Extract, translated. Mosén Diego de Valera (1412-?) is one of the most notable of fifteenth century Castilian chroniclers. His *Chronicle of the catholic kings*, which was completed in 1488, remained in MS. until 1927. The oldest MS. is preserved in the British Museum (Egerton 303) and dates from 1521. Carriazo used this copy of the chronicle and collated its text with that of a sixteenth century MS. copy in the Escorial (L. 1, 6) and with that of an eighteenth century MS. copy, now in the library of the Duke of Gor, in Granada.

² Antonio da Noli, a Genoese merchant, who travelled to Seville and from there to Lisbon, and afterwards visited Guinea as a trader in horses. Most

him to the king, his highness then being in the town of Medina del Campo. The king, practising his usual humanity and virtue, not only liberated him, but ordered him to be honourably clothed and mounted, and sent him to Portugal.

86. COMMAND OF THE SHIPS TO GO ON THIS RAID TO BE GIVEN TO CARLOS DE VALERA. KING FERDINAND TO MOSÉN DIEGO DE VALERA. BURGOS. 26 MAY 1476¹.

Mosén Diego de Valera. While I was in Madrigal, I received your letter, which was brought by your messenger, and I was very pleased to learn from it of all the things which have happened on the sea, and of the victory, which Our Lord was pleased to give us over the people and fleet of the Portuguese, and of how well your son, Charles, had conducted himself in the matter; and it is good to think that he could not have done it, if he had not had so valiant and virtuous a father. Your messenger could not be despatched, because the giving of the captaincy, for which you asked, is the right of the admiral and not mine. Afterwards, I came to Valladolid, where I was detained only for a short while, and the said admiral came there; and I at once asked him to give the captaincy to your son, as you had asked for it, and he agreed to do it, and it was then understood that he would make the necessary arrangements. After coming to this city, I received your other letter by a messenger from Diego de Herrera, and the matters therein have been fully arranged. I ask and command you always to inform me of everything which happens, and I shall thereby receive a signal service. From Burgos, on 26 May of the year 76 [1476].

I the king.

By command of the king. Gaspar de Aryno.

contemporaries credited him with the discovery of some of the islands of Cape Verde. He received the captaincy of Santiago island from King Alfonso V, and with his brother Bartholomew, and his nephew, Raphael, settled at Ribeira Grande. He was still captain in 1476, but he died in, or before, 1497. In the latter year, part of the island was granted to his daughter, Dona Branca d'Aguilar.

¹ *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*, LXIV (1914), 368. Translated.

87. QUARREL BETWEEN CARLOS DE VALERA AND THE MARQUIS OF CADIZ¹, ARISING OUT OF THE RAID. KING FERDINAND TO MOSÉN DIEGO DE VALERA. 7 SEPTEMBER 1476 (?)².

... I commanded the marquis to write, touching the quarrel between himself and your son, Charles de Valera; I believe that the said marquis will do what is reasonable and will follow my command. As soon as by the grace of God the fleet has returned thence from Guinea, you are to advise me with the greatest possible speed of everything which has occurred. From Bitoria on the seventh of September.

I the king.

88. ANOTHER ACCOUNT OF THE RAID. MOSÉN DIEGO DE VALERA TO QUEEN ISABELLA. 1476 (?)³.

... When the war with Portugal began, because of the desire I have to serve you, I equipped two caravels, and with them I sent my son, Charles de Valera, who, being in San Lúcar eager to set sail, I was informed that a very great Portuguese ship, called *la Borralla*, was very soon to come to Portugal from Milan, loaded with utensils, covers, brocades and silks of great value; and I at once wrote to Charles, ordering him to do his best to raise a force which would be sufficient to take that ship, and he joined with the galleys of the count of Pallares and of Mosén Aluaro de Naua, and with some masters of caravels, which your highness had commanded to be equipped to send to Guinea.... Battle was given... and Our Lord was pleased through your intervention that the Portuguese should be defeated and overthrown.... When the said events were ended,

¹ Rodrigo Ponce de Leon, Marquis of Cadiz (1443-92), was one of the most powerful Andalusian marcher grandees. When Affonso V of Portugal invaded Castile in May 1475, the marquis at first gave out that he would support him and later did a great deal to interfere with the preparations of the expedition of Carlos de Valera. He played a leading part in the reduction of Granada.

² *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*, LXIV, 369. Extract, translated.

³ *Epistolas de Mosén Diego de Valera* (ed. J. A. de Balenchanan; 1878), pp. 70-4. Extract, translated.

I sent to beg the king, our lord, to be pleased to give the captaincy of Guinea to Charles de Valera, my son, and he gave him this in order to reward me. On his way, he took thirty caravels and three ships, and he kept them for seven months, in which time he contended for thirteen islands of Guinea [Cape Verde islands], and he took the captain [Antonio da Noli], whom the King of Portugal had placed there, for whose ransom the Genoese merchants were obliged to give him within four months from then one thousand doblas to be available in el puerto [Puerto de Santa María]; but he did not wish to receive the doblas, and he brought him with him and sent him to your majesty, while you were in the town of Madrid; and he brought from that place 400 slaves, of whom 16 were allotted as his share, and the marquis of Calis [Cadiz] took these off him; and the duke of Medina Sidonia¹ made him pay 50,000 maravedis for the damage which he had done in the island of Antonio [Santiago], declaring that it was his own.

89. VOYAGE OF FERNÃO GOMES TO MINA. 1476².

It was very painful to the Portuguese that the Andalucians were hindering the maritime expeditions, regarded for such a long time as their own privilege, and that the enemy was availing himself of the profits, annually collected by themselves as hereditary by right and custom. Accordingly, Fernan Gomez, who was wont each year to pay King Don Alfonso 60,000 cruzados of gold, equivalent to the same number of ducats, in exchange for the sole right of sending a fleet to Guinea and reaping the profits from such a trade, declined to pay the rent, as long as he did not recover his privilege and in face of the probability that the expeditions would each time become more productive for the powerful Andalucians. Then, prince Don Juan determined that Fernan Gomez, after being exempted from the tribute, should go off to Guinea with twenty ships, preceding

¹ Don Enrique de Guzman, Duke of Medina Sidonia (?-1492), was the most powerful of the Andalusian marcher grandees, and during the earlier part of his career the bitter rival of the Marquis of Cadiz. He displayed a close interest in Guinea during the years 1475-82.

² Palencia, dec. III, bk. 25, ch. 5. Extract, translated.

the Andalucians, who were preparing another expedition of thirty sail. They did not do this, however, with necessary diligence, as they were hindered by the novelty of the enterprise, and they did not reckon on more support from King Don Fernando than his consent.

On the contrary, the Portuguese, spurred on by the accustomed profits, kept registers of crews and merchandise, and weighed anchor with the greatest speed in search of the first pickings of the gold¹. They expected less from the negotiation of the trade in pepper and the traffic in slaves, and this appeared to them more difficult. In the meantime, our men equipped themselves rather for an encounter with the Portuguese than for an exchange of goods.

90. PALENCIA'S ACCOUNT OF THE PREPARATION OF THE EXPEDITION OF CARLOS DE VALERA. 1476².

... The King of Portugal was accustomed to take abundant riches, though never honourable, from the maritime expeditions sent to the east and west coasts, besides that which he annually despatched to Guinea; and the proceeds thereof entered the royal treasury. Because arrogance and pride so excessive as to border on madness, founded on the abundance of gold brought by the voyages to the south, was added to the injuries inflicted by the Portuguese on the Castilian kings, King Don Fernando desired to avenge past insults and to make head against the expeditions then being prepared. He was aware that the numerous fleet, assembled in Lisbon waters, and destined according to custom for Guinea, under the command of the Portuguese Fernan Gomez, was intended to embark a cargo of gold. As he was without facilities for preparing, on our side, another fleet with an Andalucian crew, command was given to us, doctor

¹ 'en busca de las primicias del oro.' The struggle for trade on the Mina coast involved a race for markets. Each year only a limited quantity of gold was available on the coast. The native merchants from the interior brought the gold dust down to the coast, and the first trading fleet to reach Mina generally reaped the full harvest. Ships, coming afterwards and late, often found that little gold remained for sale. Fernão Gomes intended that his ships should reach Mina before the Castilians.

² Palencia, dec. III, bk. 26, ch. 5. Extract, translated.

Anton Rodriguez de Lillo and myself, to seek out with all diligence the bottoms necessary for the business, and to send to Guinea sufficient ships to combat the enemy. Twenty Portuguese ships had already gone, and these were known to those natives, because the frequent arrivals on their coasts had created friendly relations between them and the crews; and thus it was necessary to strengthen our fleet. This was hindered owing to lack of means, and we could get the necessary loans from the people of Seville only with difficulty. By giving adequate security and by sound perseverance, we at length succeeded in equipping thirty light vessels for Guinea, for large ones were unsuitable for the navigation of those seas, over which caravels cruise rapidly from the sea of Cadiz. The return voyage is accomplished only very slowly, and the stay there is so unhealthy that many fall sick and lose their lives as a result of seeking for gold. Those who survive come back with their faces darkened and suffer a great reduction in their strength, but they do not refrain from making one or more voyages to this sepulchre of gold, as long as the illness comes to an end. So great is the power of greed in the hearts of miserable mortals!

91. PALENCIA'S ACCOUNT OF THE RAID TO SANTIAGO. 1476¹.

The preparation of the expedition of Carlos de Valera continued; but it was only with difficulty that 25 caravels were assembled, besides 3 Vascongadas vessels². These had to assist the small ones at the Capo de Leon [Sierra Leone?], because once this point has been passed the navigation becomes difficult for ships of great draught, owing to the shallow coasts of Guinea. The return voyage to Cadiz roads is also laborious for caravels, because of the strong surge and the small resistance of the keels. Vessels which navigate from Cadiz towards Guinea glide easily, as down a hill. But for the return, they need strong sails and favourable winds, because if contrary winds blow, the delay is so considerable that, although upon most occasions some 20 days are sufficient for the 7,000 miles of the outward journey,

¹ Palencia, dec. III, bk. 26, ch. 6. Translated.

² Ships from Guipuscoa and Biscay provinces.

they are wont on the return to be delayed for four months. The most propitious season is our winter, when the Guinea sea is most peaceful and the airs most healthy¹. The Andalucians and Vascongadians, little skilled in avoiding these difficulties, delayed their start, fearing to try to overcome them, because only the men of Palos knew of old the Guinea sea, men who since the beginning of the war had been wont to fight with the Portuguese and to take away from them the slaves, acquired by the barter of worthless goods. Carlos de Valera increased the fleet with these mariners, believing that on the way he would encounter the Portuguese returning from Guinea. Thus the Andalucians did not wish to carry any cargo other than arms, in order to take away from them by pure force the gold, pepper and slaves, which Hernan Gomez, the captain of the Portuguese fleet, might have got in barter for trifles. Our captain with his Andalucians and Vascongadians would have undoubtedly succeeded in his design, if the fleet had weighed anchor in winter, when the Portuguese sailed from the port of Lisbon. But the difficulty first of gathering together the ships and afterwards the lack of adequate revenue resulted in the greater part of the May of that year 1476 being spent in preparations. A cause of greater delay was, moreover, the ill will of the men of Seville, contrary to that of the king. The duke of Medina Sidonia, Don Enrique de Guzman, had begged a thousand times that the armada should not be assembled, and, failing to prevent obedience to the orders of Don Fernando, he sent messengers to the king and queen, asking them to give him the lordship of the island of Antonio, if by chance our men came to possess it. The king, not knowing how that grant would in future prove to be troublesome for the present expedition, had no objection to conceding it to him. On the other hand, the marquis of Cadiz,

¹ Palencia displays a considerable knowledge of the Guinea navigation, knowledge which he must have obtained from experienced Spanish pilots. The voyage to Mina could generally be completed in shorter time than the return voyage. But Palencia's times are not accurate. Normally, it took a month or more to reach Mina. Diogo de Azambuja left Lisbon on 13 December 1481 and reached Mina on 19 January 1482. The voyage from England to Mina normally occupied about two months. His reckonings of distance are gross over-estimates.

who at that time secretly espoused the cause of the Portuguese, not only hindered as much as he could the prompt departure of the fleet, but also previously sent two caravels from Cadiz to warn Hernan Gomez, the Portuguese captain, of the preparations in Andalusia, and to tell him either to make use of them in the naval fight, or, if perchance our fleet was not encountered, to hold them to share in his profits.

Pedro de Estúñiga, although in words he made a pretence of being in favour of the expedition, in fact hindered it, abetting the tyranny and cunning of Gonzalo de Estúñiga, the usurper of the lordship of Palos, as a reward for having lent him aid in his violent robbery. For a long time, Gonzalo had opposed the union of the men of Palos with the other caravels, already despatched, and this was a cause of some delay.

When at last our men weighed anchor, they set their course towards the island of Antonio Nolli, separated from the first promontories of Guinea [Cape Verde] by a small arm of the western ocean. The rays of the sun are not so hot there, and, consequently, their inhabitants have not a black skin and it is not unduly scorching. I am not sure whether this island was that which the ancient geographers used to call Merua, or Auto-lola, but we can infer from whence it took the name Antonio, by which it is known today. In the reign of this Don Alfonso of Portugal, there came to Seville with other Genoese traders one, Antonio de Nolli, and from there he went to Lisbon, and, through long dealings with Don Alfonso and with his uncle Don Enrique [Prince Henry the Navigator], he took part in the expeditions of the Portuguese to Guinea, and in their transactions with the natives of the country. In one of the voyages, they arrived at a fertile and well-watered island which was not peopled; and, persuaded by the Genoese, a man of great influence among them, they resolved to inhabit it. He managed it so well that in a short time the population attained to great prosperity; he built himself a fine house on the island, and came to be rich by means both of the produce of agriculture, from which navigators who made their way towards Guinea were wont to find useful refreshment, and of the goods of other traders exchanged for provisions. Hence it was that all gave the island the

name of Antonio. When our men reached it, they took possession of him and the rest of the inhabitants, robbed as much as they could hold, and, knowing that Fernan Gomez with the fleet was approaching on his return to Portugal, the Andalusians, in order to indemnify themselves for the expenses of their expedition, made their way towards the African coasts and seized the two caravels of the marquis of Cadiz with the entire cargo and the Azanega slaves. The other savages give this name to some men who feed themselves solely on fish; they are a people of majestic stature and citrine colour, but of little spirit, and they were loth to work until they had exchanged their food for bread, whereby they became robust and acquired energy. With the booty seized in the island of Antonio and the 500 Azanega slaves, the mariners, especially those of Palos, refused to follow Carlos de Valera, and continued their voyage alone. The patrons of the other caravels, not so deeply bound as those, obeyed; but all the gains acquired were lost. The duke of Medina Sidonia, by means of the pretext of the lordship of the island of Antonio recently obtained from King Don Fernando, insistently demanded the surrender of Antonio from Valera together with the plunder seized in the island. He then began with frequent raids to molest the men of El Puerto de Santa María, of the lordship of the count of Medina Celi¹, whose mayor was Diego de Valera, the father of Carlos and a man hated by the Andalusian grandees because of his eminent qualities and excellent habits. As the marquis of Cadiz and the duke of Medina Sidonia, Don Enrique de Guzman, tenaciously persisted in harassing the inhabitants of El Puerto, they were obliged, in order to secure some respite, in the end to surrender Antonio island and to turn over to the two grandees the greater part of the slaves. In this way, the rapacity of the grandees caused the king and the patrons of the caravels to lose all the costs of the expedition.

By order of Don Fernando, the duke freed Antonio [da Noli], who went to Medina del Campo to thank him, because he wanted to hear from him in his own words, before he could

¹ Luis de la Cerda, Duke of Medina Celi, another of the Andalusian grandees who displayed a keen interest in oversea exploration. His chief claim to fame is that he assisted Columbus substantially.

return to Andalucia, what had happened in the expedition to Guinea.

92. APPOINTMENT OF LUIS GONZALEZ AS CHIEF CLERK OF ALL SHIPS FOR GUINEA. TORO. 6 DECEMBER 1476¹.

Don Fernando and Dona Isabel [*etc.*] In view of the many, good and loyal services, which you, Luis Gonzalez, our secretary, have rendered, and daily render, us, and as some reward for them, and understanding that our interests are thus promoted, our will and pleasure is that you have and hold for life the office of chief clerk of all caravels, and each of them, and of any ship or ships whatever, which henceforward shall navigate in our seas in any manner whatsoever, in order to go to trade in any port, ports, rivers, bays, seacoasts, lands, places, harbours, and islands whatsoever, which are in the parts, provinces and lordships of Guinea and, beyond, of Sierra-leona. Likewise, if any one or more caravels, or ships, of our kingdoms and lordships should sail in the said parts as fleets, or to trade, or to oppose other caravels and ships, which go there from the kingdoms of Portugal or from any other parts whatsoever, since it cannot and ought not by right to be free for any to go out or to return, unless a clerk is carried on the caravel or ship, who can exactly learn how he sails in the said parts of Guinea by our special licence and command, and to the end that, when such a ship has a commission to go to the said parts of Guinea, he may see the things which it carries to barter away, and, on the return, in the same manner, before the ship is unloaded and as soon as it arrives in the port and place where have to be unloaded and divided the merchandise or slaves, gold or plate, or any other thing whatsoever, which it carries from each and every of the said provinces and parts of Guinea, he may see and know everything which is thus loaded or divided, wherefore no fraud or diminution or any other deception may be suffered in the fifths and royal rights, which we have to have from any merchandise whatsoever, as well slaves as gold or plate or other jewels and things of whatsoever number and quality and value they may be,

¹ Pacheco, *Collection*, XXXVIII (1882), 37-42. Translated.

notwithstanding that we should have made a grant of the fifths and rights belonging to us, or of any part or parcel whatsoever thereof, to our lord admiral or to any other great knight or prelate whatsoever of our kingdoms and lordships; for which purpose we shall grant you full power so that you may, and you shall, yourself appoint him who may exercise your authority for this purpose, or you shall depute through your procurator in your name in each of the caravels and ships which shall thus navigate in Guinea to trade or as a war fleet, as is said, a clerk who may exercise that same power and authority as we give you and you exercise and would exercise if you were present there; since we are sure of the fidelity and respect which you always showed in our service, we further command you to appoint such qualified persons as clerks to go in each and every of the ships and caravels as will faithfully discharge the said office of clerkship, even as you yourself would discharge it, if you were present; and we command that the clerk, whom you appoint in each ship, shall be given that share, which, according to the customary usage in such ships, is wont to be given, allotted and assigned to him who bears the charge and office of clerk. And furthermore, we desire that you exercise the said authority, which we thus give and grant you, so freely and entirely that, if there should happen to sail for the said parts of Guinea to trade, or as a war fleet, or under any other colour or pretext, any ship and caravel, which does not carry a clerk appointed by you, according to the tenor of this present authority, before us and before the members of our council and before any judge whatsoever of the cities and towns and houses of our kingdoms and lordships, you may prosecute the captain and master and pilot, and any other person whatsoever, who shall have presumed to navigate through our seas to sail in Guinea and in the ports and rivers and bays thereof, without carrying with him the clerk, whom you wished to be deputed and nominated there for you to keep watch over, and have knowledge of, the fifths and rights due and belonging to us; and, if you suspect that they act contrary to this authority which we give you, we desire you, by virtue of this present authority which we give you, to cause the ships, and the goods which may come therein, to be placed

under an embargo, until you are assured that everything contained in these presents is known and observed, and for each and every part and parcel of this we give you full power with all its dependencies, incidences, emergencies and connections, even if they be such things of such quality that, in law or otherwise, you may or shall have to do and have to declare that they require our special command: and we command that this our letter shall be publicly proclaimed in the accustomed places of the cities of Sevilla and Jerez and Cádiz, and in the towns of Sanlúcar de Barrameda and of El Puerto de Santa María and Palos and of Huelva, whereby it may come to the public notice of all and sundry persons of whatsoever estate or condition or pre-eminence they may be, and to whom the aforesaid contents pertain or may pertain in any manner whatsoever. And we wish and it is our pleasure that you should enjoy this our letter of grant freely and fully; and by this letter, or by a copy of it signed by a public notary, we command our lord admiral of the sea and his deputy and any other persons whatsoever, who navigate through the said seas, all councils, justices, magistrates, justices of the peace, constables, aldermen, knights, esquires, officers and homes buenos of all the cities and towns and places of our kingdoms and lordships, as well royal as abbatical, to keep and execute for you, and cause to be kept and executed for you, this our letter and everything contained in it and each section and part of it; and we command them neither to act nor practise, nor to permit others to act or practise, in any manner contrary to the tenor of this our grant which we make you, and the authority which we give you, in the manner as is said; and they are rather to give and cause to be given to you every favour and aid, which you shall need, or which is needed by any of the clerks whatsoever, whom you shall name and appoint in each of the said caravels and ships; and neither one nor any of them shall practise in any manner to the contrary, under pain of our displeasure and loss of office and confiscation of goods to our exchequer and treasury, and this for each person who thus fails to perform and execute this; and further we command him, who shows them this our letter, or a copy of it, signed as is said, to summon them under the said penalty to appear before us in our

court, wherever we may be, within the first fifteen days following that on which he summons them; under this we command any public notary whatever, who is called for this purpose, that forthwith he shall give to him, who shows this letter, a testimony, signed by his hand, wherefore we may know that our command has been obeyed. Given in the city of Toro, on the sixteenth day of the month of December in the year of the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ one thousand four hundred and seventy-six.

I the king. I the queen.

93. ROYAL AUTHORITY TO THE MEN OF PALOS &c. TO SAIL TO MINA. SEVILLE. 4 MARCH 1478¹.

Doña Isabel [etc.] To my chief admiral of the sea and his deputy, and to my chief justice, and to my captain-major of the sea, and to my adelantados, judges of appeal, and to all the councils, magistrates, justices of the peace, constables, members of the twenty-four, knights, provosts, aldermen, esquires, officers and homes buenos, as well of the most noble and most loyal city of Sevilla and of all other cities and towns and houses of Andaluciá, and of the town of Bilbao, and of my noble and loyal count of Viscaya, as of all other cities and towns and houses of the said count, and of all my other kingdoms and lordships, both those which are seaports and others whatsoever, and to my captain and captains and men-at-arms of the fleet, which I have commanded or shall command to be equipped, and to the masters and patrons and boatswains of warships and galleys and barks and of other ships and vessels whatsoever, which sail and will sail through the seas and for the ports and havens of my kingdoms and lordships, and to other persons whatsoever, my vassals and subjects and naturals, of whatsoever estate or condition, preeminence or dignity they may be, and to any men-at-arms whatsoever, who are or will be in the service and obedience of the king, my lord, or of me, and to each and all whatso-

¹ Pacheco, *Coleccion*, XXXVIII, 54-61. Translated. This authority, given to the men of Palos, seems to have been in preparation for the expedition, described below in docs. 94-8.

ever of you, to whom this my letter shall be shown, or a copy of it signed by a public notary, greeting and thanks. Know that I have commanded and commanded certain residents of the town of Palos and of other towns and houses of the seacoast and of other cities and towns and houses of the said seacoast and of Andaluciá, and of other parts of my kingdoms and lordships, that they might go with certain of their ships to la Mina del Oro, and these men have made report to me, saying that they and their servants and factors purpose to proceed and navigate through the seas and for the ports and havens of my said kingdoms and lordships, and likewise by land with their goods and merchandise to contract and sell and exchange and buy cloths and trinkets and iron and steel and pieces of iron and woollens and other merchandise, and that they fear lest you, the aforesaid, or one or some of you, or some other persons, should take them from themselves, or from their said servants and factors, or should confiscate them, or wish to confiscate or lay an embargo upon their said ships and goods and merchandise, which they exchange and carry through the seas and for the ports and havens of my said kingdoms and lordships, or by land, as well on the journey to the said Mina as during the stay at it, or on the return, or through any parts of my said kingdoms and lordships by which they happen to go, in discharge of any debts whatsoever of maravedis and victuals and other things, which the councils and the natives and residents of the cities and towns and houses, where they live, or any particular persons whatsoever of them, or any other councils and persons, may or shall owe, or may be bound to give and pay in any manner whatsoever to other councils and persons whatsoever of my said kingdoms and lordships or otherwise, or to pay for seizures or reprisals which have been made or are made by any councils upon others or by any particular persons upon others, such debts, or any of them not being of such a nature or made in such form, wherefore by act and by right neither they nor their factors and overseers and goods and merchandise were or are held to such debts and reprisals or to part thereof, and wherefore they have not carried and do not carry to my said kingdoms and do not remove from them such merchandise or other things

as have been or are forbidden by my ordinances; for which reason they say that neither they, nor any of their said factors, dared to go on the said voyage, for which I commission them, or to sail or navigate through the said seas or for the ports and havens and for my said kingdoms and lordships or to go outside them or to come safe and secure, and with their said merchandise and goods and things; and they begged and petitioned me as a favour that some provision should be made for this by my commanding my letter to be given to them, in order that they and their said factors could go freely on the said voyage, which I command them to make for the said Mina and for these my said kingdoms, and to buy and sell and barter their said goods and merchandise, and that they should not be taken or detained or distrained, save only for their known debt or as my pleasure shall be, and I think it right; accordingly, I command each and all of you in your places and jurisdictions that from now onwards you shall allow and consent freely and without restraint to the said inhabitants of the said town of Palos and of the other parts of my said kingdoms that in this way by my command they may go to the said Mina, and their said men and dependants and factors and servants are to go on the said voyage and to sail for these my said kingdoms and lordships and through the seas, and for the ports and havens thereof, to contract and buy and sell their said goods and merchandise, and that you shall not take or seize or confiscate or put under restraint, or allow to be taken or seized or confiscated or put under restraint the ships and vessels of them or their said factors and men and servants and overseers, or any of them, and the merchandise and goods and things which they carry and exchange both to the said Mina and for any parts whatsoever of my said kingdoms and lordships whereunto they happen to go both by land and sea, either in discharge of one or more debts of bread or iron or steel or any maravedis or clothes or woollens or oils or any other things whatsoever, which the councils of the said cities and towns and houses, where they live, owe or shall owe to the inhabitants and residents of them, or are or shall be obliged to give to other councils whatsoever and particular persons of my said kingdoms and lordships or of abroad, or to pay for seizures

or reprisals which have been or are made by any councils upon others and by any particular persons upon others, save only for their own acknowledged debts, or for a pledge which they have made, or if they, or their said factors, or any of them, are or have been held and bound by deed or right in any manner whatsoever to such debts or reprisals or any of them, or in payment of maravedis for my rents, taxes and dues; but it is my pleasure that the inhabitants of the said town of Palos and of the other parts of my kingdoms, who by my command thus go to Mina, or their said factors, agents and servants, or any of them, shall not, and may not, take any goods from my kingdoms to the kingdom of France¹ or to the kingdom of Portugal; nor may they, nor shall they, carry such goods from the said kingdoms to my said kingdoms and lordships without my licence; nor may they, nor shall they, furthermore, carry to my said kingdoms and lordships, nor take from them abroad, either goods or chattels or any other things included among those forbidden and prohibited by me; and likewise it is my pleasure that they do not, and may not, carry in their said ships any French or Portuguese persons, or the persons of other enemies of my kingdoms, or their goods, or any of their merchandise, and that the ordinance about this, made by me, is to be accordingly observed. Furthermore, if they desire to equip ships, it is my pleasure that first they must and shall provide plain, recognised and sufficient guarantors before the justices of the said cities, towns and houses, where they are equipping, in the presence of a public notary, that they will do no wrong or harm to friends, or to any others, with whom my lord the king and I have no war; if indeed they act contrary to their pledges, they shall pay for it with their bodies and possessions; and by this my letter, or by a signed copy of it, as is said, I take and receive into my keeping and security and under my favour and royal protection the aforesaid inhabitants of the said town of Palos, and of the other cities, towns and houses of my said kingdoms and lordships, who by my command go to the said Mina, and their said factors, agents, dependants and servants, whom in the presence

¹ At this time France was allied to Portugal and was displaying at least an unfriendly neutrality towards Castile.

of you, my said justices, or any of you, they nominate, say and declare to be the names of their men, together with all their ships, goods and merchandise, and the things which they carry and exchange, and I secure them against all and sundry, my vassals, subjects and naturals, whom they name in the presence of any of you whatsoever, my said justices, and against those whom they say they fear, so that these shall not wound or kill or lame them, or command them to be wounded or killed or seized or lamed, or command their goods to be placed under an embargo, or any other evil or damage or injury to be done upon their bodies, merchandise or goods, contrary to right; and I command you, my said justices, and each of you, to cause this my said safe-conduct, and all contained herein, to be publicly proclaimed by the town-crier in the presence of a public notary in the squares, market-places and other usual places of the said cities, towns and houses, so that all may know, and shall know, of it, and may not and cannot pretend ignorance thereof; and, when the said proclamation has been made, if any person or persons should act or practise, or desire to act or practise, against this my said safe-conduct, and against what is contained in this my said letter, I command you, my said justices, to proceed against such persons and against their goods with the heaviest civil and criminal penalties you may by right impose, as against those, who practise and transgress against the safe-conduct appointed by the letter and command of their queen and natural lord; and neither you nor the others shall in any manner do the contrary of what is desired, under pain of my displeasure and loss of office and confiscation to my exchequer and treasury of the goods of those who do the contrary; and further I command him, who shall show you this my letter, to summon you under the said penalty to appear before me in my court, wherever I may be, within the first fifteen days following that on which he summons you; under which I command any public notary whatsoever, who is called for this purpose, that he shall forthwith give him, who shows this letter to you, a testimony signed with his own hand, whereby I may know that my command has been obeyed. Given in the most noble and loyal city of Sevilla on the fourth day of the month of March in the year of the birth of

Our Lord Jesus Christ one thousand four hundred and seventy-eight.

I the queen.

I Alfonso de Avila, secretary of our lady the queen, caused this to be written by her command.

94. EXPEDITION OF PEDRO DE COBIDES TO MINA. QUEEN ISABELLA TO MOSÉN DIEGO DE VALERA. SEVILLE. 18 APRIL 1478¹.

... You already know how the count of Medina Celi concluded an arrangement to the effect that this, his town of El Puerto [de Santa María], should next provide a well-laden caravel as one of a fleet to join with the others, which by my command are being equipped against the people of Portugal; and because it is necessary that this should be done immediately, I sent thither to you Alfonso del Salto, an attendant of my household, so that he might [attend to this matter?]², and I command you with all diligence to cause the said caravel to depart, so that it may unite in Sant Lucar de Barrameda with the others, which will be found there for this purpose. You will give trust and credit in all this to the said Alfonso del Salto, and let there be no delay in this matter for my service....

95. CASTILIAN REQUEST FOR PAPAL SUPPORT FOR THE VOYAGE. 1478 (?)³.

Instructions which the catholic king and queen gave to the bishop of Tuy, the abbot of Saliagun and doctor Juan Arias, all being members of their council and their ambassadors in Rome, touching the negotiations which they were conducting in that court.

... Furthermore, you are to procure that his holiness may give licence and authority to us, and to the persons to whom we or any of us whatsoever may give licence, so that they may trade with the infidels, who hold la mina del oro é de la Guinea [the

¹ *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*, LXIV, 371. Extract, translated.

² Gap in text.

³ M. F. de Navarrete, *Colección de documentos inéditos para la historia de España*, VII (1845), 552. Undated. Extract, translated.

mine of gold and of Guinea], without thereby incurring sentence of excommunication. And in any case you are to try to get this done and his holiness to grant one of his bulls for this purpose with all necessary and opportune clauses without hindrance¹.

96. PULGAR'S ACCOUNT OF COBIDES'S VOYAGE. 1478².

(pt. 2, ch. 76.) . . . Likewise in those days as many as thirty-five caravels from the city of Sevilla and from the other ports of Andalucia departed for la Mina del Oro. Many merchants and others went in these caravels, and they were disposed to endure the long sea-journey and the sicknesses, which were common in that land. These men took the ships loaded with old clothes, shells, mortars and manillas of brass, and other things which were in demand by the people who lived in those lands. The king and queen sent as captain in that fleet a knight who was called Pedro de Covides, and they commanded all the crews and merchants, who went in that fleet, to render obedience to him. The king and queen took the fifth part of all the gold which was carried from that land, whereby they drew a great rent. . . .

(pt. 2, ch. 88.) . . . As we have recorded, in the preceding year [1478] thirty-five ships set sail from the seaports of Andalucia to go to the land where the mine of gold was situated. The

¹ This application to Pope Sixtus IV to permit Castilians to sail to Guinea and Mina throws light upon the continuous struggle at Rome between the representatives of Portugal and Castile, waged at this time to secure papal sanction for their overseas explorations. The papal bulls of 8 January 1455 (*Romanus pontifex*) and 13 March 1456 (*Inter caetera*) had granted all islands and mainlands, discovered or to be discovered, beyond Cape Bojador to Prince Henry of Portugal, as grand master of the Order of Christ in that country. Castile had never recognised this concession, though some of the later medieval jurists would probably have argued that papal grants were binding upon all Christian rulers. King Ferdinand now wished the grants of 1455-6 to be reversed in his favour. The succession war against Portugal and the preparation of a great armada, destined to sail from Andalusia to Mina in order to expel the Portuguese, offered a suitable occasion for approaching the pope. If available evidence may be trusted, he was not successful. There is no record of a favourable reply from Sixtus IV. At the end of the war of succession, King Ferdinand agreed to surrender his claim, and Pope Sixtus, on 21 June 1481, confirmed the earlier grants to Portugal by the bull *Aeterni regis*.

² Pulgar, pt. 2, chs. 76, 88. Extracts, translated.

people, who sailed in these ships, made their way to those parts in safety, and they bartered away for pieces of gold the shells, brass goods, old clothes and other things, which they carried, so much sought after and desired by the savages who live in that land. When their bartering was over, while they were making the return journey with a great sum of gold, the Portuguese, who had been warned how they had set out to make that voyage, equipped certain ships and awaited the Castilians at the time when they understood that they might return. They met them and captured all the thirty-five ships with all the gold, which they carried, and they took all those who had sailed in the ships; and from the gold derived by this seizure, whereof the King of Portugal took the fifth, which belonged to him, he had enough money to pay the troops and to equip the force, which was defeated by the master of Santiago¹. And many of the Portuguese, who were captured in the battle, were exchanged for Castilians, who had been taken with the ships, and thus the prisoners on both sides were freed.

97. PORTUGUESE VERSION OF THE VOYAGE OF COBIDES. 1478².

... And because the prince³ in the year before the conclusion of peace⁴ heard that a certain fleet had gone from Castile against his prohibition to trade at Myna, he fitted out against it another fleet, of which at one time Jorge Correa, commander of Pinheiro, was captain-major, and at another time Mem Palha, both being honourable men and good knights. These men came upon the Castilians at Myna, and they attacked them in such a way

¹ Don Alonso de Cárdenas.

² Ruy de Pina, *Chronica del rey D. Affonso V* (ed. J. Correa da Serra; 1790), ch. 208. Extract, translated.

³ Prince John, afterwards King John II of Portugal.

⁴ The war of succession was brought to an end in 1479. Preliminary negotiations were conducted at Alcantara, between Isabella of Castile and Princess Beatrice of Portugal, in March 1479, and in the following June Doctor Roderigo Maldonado de Talavera, a lawyer, was sent from Castile with full powers to conclude a treaty with the Portuguese. He was successful. At Alcaçovas, on 4 September, peace was concluded. The treaty was ratified by King Affonso V at Évora a few days later, and at Toledo, on 6 March 1480, by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. See Davenport, I, 33-48.

that without much harm to themselves they took their fleet away from the enemy with much gold and merchandise, and they carried the persons of the crew bound and captive to Lixboa; but by a condition of the peace the prisoners were released, and the gold, which was a very great sum, just as it came in trinkets and gold pieces, was carried to Beja, and the prince made a gift of the most part of it to the ambassadors of Castile, who afterwards came to Moura in connection with the conclusion of the truce.

98. ANOTHER PORTUGUESE VERSION OF THE VOYAGE OF COBIDES. 1478¹.

... In this year², King Dom Afonso and the prince [John] ordered George Correa, commander of Pinheiro, and Mem Palha, good and valiant knights, to cruise round the coast of Guinea, each one in his captaincy; and these men joined forces in Mina roads and routed thirty-five warships and vessels of Castile, of which Pedro de Covides was captain, who from the time of the war went there trading by command of King Dom Fernando and Queen Doña Isabel; and they conveyed all these warships and crews to this kingdom with much gold, which they had purchased; but by virtue of the provisions of the peace, they were soon released, and the warships and vessels returned, and the prince made a gift of the greater part of the gold to the ambassadors of Castile and to other lords, who at that time were at the court³.

99. ORGANISATION OF A NEW FLEET IN CASTILE TO GO TO MINA. JANUARY 1479⁴.

The year 1479. The king and queen were in Guadalupe on January 18, according to a letter which they wrote to this city

¹ Damião de Góes, *Chronica do príncipe Dom João segundo do nome* (1567), ch. 103. Extract, translated.

² 1480, according to the context, but this must be wrong.

³ The extract bears many resemblances to the version given by Pina, from whom Góes may have drawn his information.

⁴ Zúñiga, pp. 386-7. Extract, translated.

[Seville], about the conditions contained in the peace with the King of France¹, and soon there, or in Truxillo [Trujillo], whither they soon passed, a report came to them of the death of the King of Aragon, their father and father-in-law, which happened on the nineteenth of the month²; therefore, on February 7, they were at last declared King and Queen of Aragon. And Melchor Maldonado came to their court to express the condolence and to notify them how the peace with France had been proclaimed at Sevilla, and he returned, accompanied by Fernando de Bustamante, a dependant of the king and queen, with orders that more vigour should be put into the preparation of the fleet of 20 caravels, which were being built by contract to go to la Mina de Guinea and to expel the Portuguese from it.

100. ROYAL ORDER FOR THE PREPARATION OF A FLEET TO GO TO MINA. TRUJILLO. 17 FEBRUARY 1479³.

By a royal order, issued at Trujillo, on 17 February 1479, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella commanded that armaments should be made ready, so that the crews of ships would be powerful by sea, and some of these were to go to trade at Mina, and others were to be sent to protect the traders. Officers were appointed to take charge of the equipment of 20 caravels which were to go to Mina. No-one was to go to Mina or the coasts of Guinea, without a royal licence, on pain of death and confiscation of goods. Those who desired to equip ships for Mina were to have recourse to the chief judicial officer of

¹ In 1475, King Affonso V of Portugal, upon the occasion of his invasion of Castile, had entered into negotiations with King Louis XI of France, asking him for his support. The French king gave him active support by encouraging his subjects to raid Spanish territory in Guipuscoa. But in the autumn of 1478, Louis XI, influenced by Affonso V's mismanagement of the war, concluded a peace with King Ferdinand at St. Jean de Luz, and agreed to abandon the Portuguese alliance.

² King John II of Navarre (1396-1479) actually died on January 20.

³ M. Fernandez de Navarrete, *Colección de viajes*, 1 (1825), xxxix. Abstract. Navarrete does not print the document, from which he quotes, but he gives its reference as Archivo de Sevilla, bk. 1, f. 370. Zúñiga's note that 20 caravels were equipped to go to Mina in 1479 suggests that Navarrete's reference is authentic.

Seville, or the corregedor of Jerez, who would give them the necessary aid and security for their intended voyages.

101. ABSTRACT FROM THE 'VOYAGE' OF EUSTACHE DE LA FOSSE TO MINA. 1479-80¹.

Eustache de la Fosse, a native of Tournai, left Bruges at Easter 1479 and sailed to Spain, landing at Laredo and going to Seville, whither his master had sent the goods which he was to take with him to the mine of gold. He found that their factor had made everything ready in Seville, having put the goods on the caravel, which had been hired for the voyage. The services of a pilot of Niebla were secured, and they went to Cadiz. After a first attempt to put to sea on October 2, they got under way about eight days later, and in due course reached 'Sapphir [Safi] in Barbarie'. They saw two Portuguese caravels in the port, 'enemies to us, and we did not want to fight with them'. A storm off Safi delayed their progress, but the wind veered round on All Saints' Day (November 1), and then they put in to that port, where some of the crew spoke to the factors of the King of Portugal. From Safi they went to the isles of Canare, touching at Lancerot [Lanzarote], and provisioning at Fer [Ferro]; at Ferro, one of their Genoese mariners deserted. They found several islands in the group of the Canare, 'as you will find in the printed work called *Le nouveau monde et navigations faictes par Emeric Vespuce, Florentyn*'². From there they sailed to the river of gold [Rio do Ouro], 'in which river the Spaniards are accustomed to go to fish every year', on to Cape Blanc, and so to Cappe de Barbas. Here the coast was low and dangerous; 'and Henry was lost here, the factor of Thomas Perrot, merchant of Bruges, which factor ruined his master, and by this cause and others made him bankrupt; his said ship was broken on the shores of the said gulf, and they were cast on the land

¹ *Revue hispanique*, IV, 174-201.

² The *Mundus novus* of Amerigo Vespucci was printed in Paris, in 1516. Professor Alberto Magnaghi considers that it was a forgery (*Amerigo Vespucci*, 2 vols., Rome; 1924). Forgery, or otherwise, the date of its publication enables us to learn that Eustache de la Fosse did not write the narrative of his 'Voyage' until after 1516.

with their little boat, and they took victuals and arms, and returned overland to the river of gold in the hope of finding some Spanish fishermen there, and they were constrained to defend themselves on the said river against the Moors, because the said fishermen had all returned to Spain; and in the end they were all murdered there by those Moors of Barbarie¹.

Eustache sailed on to Cape Verde, where he saw two caravels, one of which approached, and was found to have been equipped at Cadiz, at the same time as his own, to go to the mine. The two ships then went on in company, passing the isle of the Ydolles [the isles de Los], Serre Lyonne, and the shoals of Sainte Anne, and so they reached the place where the *graine de paradys* was grown. They bartered for pepper and slaves here, one woman and one child costing them 1 shaving bowl and 3 or 4 great brass rings. The natives went almost naked and were thieves. They came close to the caravels in their *almuydes*, which were little barks, long and narrow, made all in one piece, and pointed at each end. 3 or 4 or more natives went in each, kneeling, and they navigated with a stick, about an ell in length and having at the end a broad or square blade.

Eustache reached the mine of gold on December 17, and here they sold the slaves, previously bought, for gold. They had 'left the other caravel on the coast of the said *graine de paradise*, because the crew wanted more of it and some slaves in order to take them to sell at the said mine. And before separating one from the other, we drew lots as to which of us should go six leagues farther on, for there are two ports at the said mine of gold, the first being named Chama [Samma], and the other, which is six leagues beyond, the village of two parts, and this because there are two villages, a bowshot one from the other'. It fell to Eustache's lot to go forward, which he did on Sunday, December 18. His men took hostages from the manse and caramanse, who were the king and viceroy, and the following day began to trade. They did not make much progress for 4 or 5 days, until the merchants, called Berrenbucs, came down from the mountains to buy their goods. On December 20, the other

¹ This quotation evidently refers to a Flemish, or Castilian, voyage to Guinea, undertaken before 1479, of which no other record appears to exist.

caravel was seized by the Portuguese, and on the following day four Portuguese warships attacked them, and they, too, were made captive. Only the principal persons were kept, however, the ordinary mariners being supplied with provisions and allowed to return to Spain in one of the caravels. Eustache was put in the ship of Fernand de les Vaux [Fernão do Po], and afterwards transferred to the charge of the other Portuguese captain, Diogo Can [sic], when the former sailed under orders 200 leagues farther on to the Rio do Esclavos to obtain slaves for sale at Mina. At the end of Lent 1480, the ships began to return to Portugal, passing la Cappe des 3 pointes [Cape Three-points], la Manighette [Malagueta], and Serrelionne, and in due course reaching the islands of Cape Verde, where they saw lepers, who were there to be cured, and where they caught a great number of oysters. They reached the mouth of the Tagus, in Portugal, on the eve of Pentecost; 'and the next day, . . . a post was despatched to the king to inform him how the ships from the mine of gold had arrived; . . . and we went to Setomire [Setubal?], to which place the commissioners of the king came to investigate what goods his ships had brought from the said mine of gold'. Eustache and his associates were put in irons and imprisoned, and afterwards condemned to be hung for having gone to the mine of gold without the licence of the king. But they bribed their gaoler to connive at an escape, which he did. Eustache, after many other adventures, at length reached Bruges in December 1480.

102. THE VOYAGE OF TWO CARAVELS, *La Bolandra* AND *La Toca*, FROM ANDALUSIA TO MINA DURING THE WINTER OF 1479-80. DECREE OF THE CATHOLIC KINGS. TOLEDO. 3 FEBRUARY 1480¹.

Don Fernando and Dona Isabel [etc.] To you, Jorge de Tordesillas, deputy of the admiral, and to you, Alvaro de Medina

¹ This was the usual procedure upon the arrival of the annual fleet from Mina. The king was always informed, and his commissioners of the customs were then sent to examine the cargo, before anything was unloaded, in order to prevent smuggling and evasion of the customs.

² Pacheco, *Colección*, XXXVIII, 79-82. Translated.

and Antonio de Tamayo, merchants, and to each of you, as persons who for certain reasons were to have the fifth of goods from la Mina del Oro and the barter of Guinea to come in the caravels *la Bolandra* and *la Toca* and . . .¹, which have come and are expected to come from the said Mina del Oro and the barter of Guinea, and to other persons whatsoever, of whatever estate, condition, preeminence or dignity they may be, who hold a share in the said gold, and in any other goods, which come in the said three caravels², and to captains, masters, merchants, and others whatsoever, who hold a share in other caravels that have gone to the said mine and barter, and to each of you, to whom this our letter shall be shown, or a copy of it signed by a public notary, greetings and thanks. Know that we, upon the petition of yourselves and of others who hold a share in the said caravels, have sent to the most illustrious King and princes of Portugal, our most dear and beloved cousins, asking them to be pleased to give a safe-conduct to all the said caravels, on condition that, if they grant the said safe-conduct, they or their deputy will receive the fifth and the dues from the said caravels; and because, if they carry the said safe-conduct, the said prince will assuredly receive and collect the said fifth; and in order to secure the fulfilment of what ought by right to be done in this matter and the promotion of our service, and because it is our pleasure that the said fifth shall be manifestly levied on all gold and other goods, which shall and may come in the said three caravels, we agree to command this our letter in the said cause to be given to you; therefore we command you, and each of you, as soon as you may be required by the letter, to declare, under the oath which you shall first take touching this matter, in the presence of Diego de Merlo, a member of our council and our assistant of the most noble city of Sevilla, or in the presence of his deputy, all the gold and other goods, which have been, or are being, brought from the said Mina del Oro and barter of Guinea; and, having thus made the declaration, you yourselves may retain that which you will have to pay as the said fifth,

¹ Gap in the text.

² This would suggest that the name of a third caravel has been omitted from the text in the gap indicated.

provided that you give clear and full security to repair with it to him whom we command you to approach; and you, the said Jorge de Tordesillas, Alvaro de Medina and Antonio de Tamayo, and others whatsoever, who for any reason have received the said fifths or any part of them, may retain what you have received; and likewise, provided you give him the said security and the pledges, you may retain the fifth for yourselves, and you are not to repair with such to any other person without our licence and special command; and if you, the said Jorge de Tordesillas, Alvaro de Medina and Antonio de Tamayo, have not received the said fifths, we command you in future not to receive them or any part of them, so that they shall have them who are to have them, as is said, whereby our command to you in this matter may be obeyed and fulfilled; and we order persons, who pay you the said fifths, that they likewise shall declare before the said assistant what they pay you, taking the oath according to the tenor of this our letter; by which letter, we command the said assistant to compel and oblige you to take the said oath and to give the said pledges, and if you will not give them, as is said, to seize your bodies and confiscate your goods, and not to give you liberty or credit, until you shall have done and fulfilled everything contained in this letter. We give full power to the said assistant or his deputy for all and each part and section of this letter [*etc.*]. . . . Given in the noble city of Toledo, on the third day of February in the year of the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ one thousand four hundred and eighty¹.

I the king. I the queen.

I Fernan Alvarez de Toledo, secretary of the king and queen, our lords, caused this to be written by their command.

¹ Both this, and the following, document seem to refer to voyages initiated before the conclusion of peace between Portugal and Castile. It is not unlikely that the caravels, mentioned in these records, were originally to have formed part of the large fleet of twenty, which Zúñiga and Navarrete tell us was assembled in the ports of Andalusia at the beginning of 1479 in order to sail to Mina. When negotiations for the conclusion of peace were begun, however, King Ferdinand probably abandoned his preparations and withdrew, or withheld, official sanction for the intended expedition. Some of the more enterprising merchants, possibly annoyed at the prospect of losing a chance of easy wealth, ignored the changed situation and sent their caravels to Mina just before the peace was signed.

103. THE VOYAGE OF TWO OTHER CARAVELS, *La Galiota* AND *Sant Telmo*, FROM ANDALUSIA TO MINA DURING THE WINTER OF 1479-80. DECREE OF THE CATHOLIC KINGS. TOLEDO. FEBRUARY 1480¹.

To the dukes [etc.] of Sevilla, Calis [Cadiz], Rola, San Lúcar de Barrameda, and all other cities, towns and houses of my kingdoms and lordships, and to others [etc.], to whom this my letter shall be shown, or a copy thereof signed by a public notary, greetings and thanks. Know that I have given licence to Diego Diaz of Madrid, a merchant and inhabitant of Sevilla, and to Alfonso de Avila, a merchant and inhabitant of Valladolid, so that they may go with two caravels to the barter of la Mina del Oro and the Isles of Guinea, according as this and other things are contained more at large in the letters and annexes touching the matter, which I commanded them to be given. Before peace was proclaimed between these my kingdoms and the kingdoms of Portugal, they sent the said two caravels to the said Mina del Oro and the barter of the Isles of Guinea, one of which is called *la Galiota* and the other *Sant Telmo*; and, after they had been sent, I wrote to the illustrious Prince of Portugal, my most dear and beloved cousin, so that he should grant a safe-conduct for the said two caravels, according as this and other things are contained more at large in the said safe-conduct and the letter, which the said Prince of Portugal gave them; and now the said Diego Diaz of Madrid and Alfonso de Avila have begged and petitioned me as a favour to command my letter to be given to them, in order that the said safe-conduct and letter, which the said Prince of Portugal gave them for the said two caravels, might be preserved for them; and this was done, since it was my wish and I thought it well, and I commanded them to be given, and I gave them, this my letter for you on this account; therefore, I command each and all of you, in your places and jurisdictions, to observe the said letter and safe-conduct, which the said Prince of Portugal gave them for the said two caravels, and to keep and fulfil them; . . . and whereas at the time, when I

¹ Pacheco, *Collección*, XXXVIII, 76-8. Extract, translated.

gave them my said letter of licence in order to go to the said Isles and la Mina del Oro, my lord admiral of the sea gave them a letter of his own, in which he thanked them for the fourth and the fifth pertaining to him, as you will see by his letter, likewise I command you to observe this. . . . Given in the most noble city of Toledo, . . . day of February in the year of Our Lord Jesus Christ one thousand four hundred and eighty.

104. ORDER OF KING AFFONSO V OF PORTUGAL TO HIS CAPTAINS TO CAST INTO THE SEA THE CREWS OF SHIPS FOUND BEYOND THE CANARIAS. VIANNA. 6 APRIL 1480¹.

Dom Affonso [etc.]. To all who may see this our letter, we make known that, in order to defend, guard and preserve the trades of Gujnee, the barters and mines of gold, and the commerce which rightly belongs to these kingdoms only and to no others, as is fitting for a matter of such importance, substance, moment and value, we, by this present letter, give the following power, authority, and special command to the captains, who at any time may be sent by my son, the prince etc., to the said Guinea: if they meet any caravels whatever, or any ships, of any people whatsoever of Espanha [Spain], or belonging to any other persons, who are, or may be, on their way out to the said Guinea or on their way back, or who are in it, in any manner whatsoever, beyond the boundaries, which by the agreed terms of the peace, made between our said kingdoms and those of Castile, have been appointed and declared, these boundaries and limits running downwards from the Canarias towards Guinea, that as soon as such persons shall have been seized, without any further order or course of law, all may be, and shall be, forthwith cast into the sea, so that they may then die a natural death; and they may not be carried to these kingdoms, or to any other parts, because they are to suffer punishment for trying and desiring to do something strictly forbidden and prohibited. It will be a good lesson to those, who may hear or learn of it, to beware of doing the like. Accordingly, we recommend my said son to order his said captains, whom he sends in future

¹ *Alguns documentos*, pp. 45-6. Translated.

to the said Guinea, to do this accordingly, and to give them a special instruction to this effect; accordingly, we give him full authority, as we have and hold it, to do this and to command it to be so done. To certify all this, we command this our letter, signed by us and sealed with our seal, to be issued by him. Done in Vjana, on 6 April 1480.

